

COVID-19 Update for Partners

January 6, 2022

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Local Issues

Ontario moves to modified Step 2 of Roadmap to Reopen

- As of January 5, 2022, Ontario is in Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen with modifications that consider the province's ongoing vaccination efforts.
- The move is in response to the alarming increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations and is meant to blunt the transmission of COVID-19 to prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed, and to protect the capacity of the healthcare and public health systems due to staff shortages from COVID-19 infections and isolation requirements.
- Public health measures will be in place for at least 21 days (until January 26) and are subject to trends in public health and the impacts on the health system. A full list of measures is available on the [province's website](#).
- Hospitals are also pausing all non-emergent and non-urgent surgeries and procedures to preserve critical care and human resources capacity, and students will not be returning to in-person learning until at least January 17.

Changes to HealthSTATS

- Like other health units across the province, capacity issues are requiring that the health unit adjusts its case management procedures. This impacts some important COVID-19 case and contact data as the collection of this information has been suspended. The result will be the following changes to our [HealthSTATS pages](#):
 - As of Wednesday, January 12, 2022, the [COVID-19 Case Explorer](#) will be deactivated. The case explorer was originally created to provide case-based information by municipality. Without accurate geographic assignments (based on case address), municipality-level data is no longer possible.
 - Most of the geographic distribution expander bar section will be revised on the [COVID-19 Case Characteristics and Geographic Distribution page](#). All municipality-level data will be removed and where possible, replaced with data for Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka.
- The rising case numbers not only impacts data collection, but also the health unit's capacity to follow up on positive cases. As previously communicated, the health unit is only doing follow up on positive cases that are from a high-risk priority group such as those in long-term care homes and other congregate settings.

Vaccination update

- Currently there are more than 50,600 booster appointments booked at all Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) led clinics until January 20, with appointments also booked through to the end of January at 29 Sperling.
- As of December 30, 167,841 Simcoe Muskoka residents had received a third dose/booster (34% of the population 18+; 51% of 50+; and 69% of 70+ population).
- Our staff and partners are doing their best to get as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible. Please be patient and respectful when trying to book an appointment and when attending walk-in vaccination clinics.
- In contrast, the vaccination coverage rate for first dose for children aged five to 11 years is at 41% and we would like to see this number increase quickly.
- Getting your child vaccinated is the best way to protect them from COVID-19 and to prevent them from passing the virus to grandparents or others who can get seriously ill.
- Children are most frequently exposed to COVID-19 by a close contact, so it is very important that all eligible household members get fully vaccinated as soon as possible. Even if someone in your household had COVID-19 before, it is still recommended that they get the COVID-19 vaccine.
- While most children who have gotten COVID-19 have milder symptoms or no symptoms, in rare instances, some children can become very ill with COVID-19 requiring hospitalization; some also experience a rare condition associated with COVID-19 infection called Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome.

Previous SMDHU MOH media briefings are posted on the SMDHU [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) channel.

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Data (as of January 6, 2022)					
Total Confirmed Cases	Active Cases (% change from previous week, not available)	New cases Dec 26-Jan 1 (% change from previous week)	Total deaths (# change from previous week)	Current Hospitalizations (# change from previous week)	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated (Target 90%)
24,361	6,577	3,537 (115%)	291 (+1)	32 (+13)	86%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 32 people with COVID-19 who are currently hospitalized in Simcoe Muskoka, 8 are in the ICU. • There have been 1,641 new cases reported to the health unit for the current week. There were 3,537 new cases reported to the health unit last week (week of December 26), more than double the 1,643 cases reported for the week of December 19. • From November 7 to January 1, the rate of COVID-19 infection among the unvaccinated vaccine-eligible Simcoe Muskoka population is two times higher than it is for fully vaccinated population and the rate of COVID-19 hospitalizations is 17 times higher. Please note that due to the smaller number of unvaccinated hospitalized cases, one or two additional hospitalized cases will noticeably change the ratio listed above. • Currently 85% of the population 5 years and older living in Simcoe Muskoka have had at least one dose of vaccine including 82% of youth 12 to 17 years of age. In addition, 41% of children 5 to 11 years of age have received at least one dose of vaccine. • There are currently 48 active outbreaks, with no active outbreaks in local schools. (All remaining school outbreaks were declared over during the winter break). • More local data available at: SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page and COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard 					

Local Media Updates *(Since December 30, 2021)*

- Pausing surgeries has 'a large impact on our community': Orillia hospital president ([article](#))
- Midland closes rec centre, adopts changes at town hall due to Omicron surge ([article](#))
- New COVID-19 rules hit Collingwood residents in different ways ([article](#))
- When as a society do we learn to live with COVID-19? ([article](#))
- COVID-19 Omicron variant leads to growing concern for Simcoe Muskoka hospitals, long-term care ([article](#))
- Educators, families left 'scrambling' to adapt to remote learning, head of Simcoe County teachers' union says ([article](#))
- Georgian College scraps plans for on-campus learning for winter semester ([article](#))
- Health unit keeping close eye on COVID outbreaks at 41 vulnerable settings ([article](#))
- COVID leading to strain on OSMH's emergency department, ICU, staff ([article](#))
- Gravenhurst municipal operations update due to COVID-19 restrictions ([article](#))
- UPDATE: COVID-19 outbreak at Muskoka Shores in Gravenhurst now impacting 52 residents, 14 staff ([article](#))
- Non-urgent surgeries at G&M Hospital postponed a third time, unknown how many impacted ([article](#))
- Tiny closes municipal office to the public amid latest COVID-19 wave ([article](#))
- You'll need the enhanced vaccine passport starting today ([article](#))
- Innisfil parents react to delayed school start ([article](#))
- Mayor 'frustrated' with new restrictions, calls for immediate plan ([article](#))
- 'Suspected' COVID outbreak under investigation at Soldiers' Memorial ([article](#))
- COLUMN: Deadly outbreak at Roberta Place can never be forgotten ([opinion](#))
- Restrictions feel like 'abuse' to frustrated Orillia restaurant owners ([article](#))
- One more COVID-19 case reported at Orillia's Lighthouse ([article](#))
- Citing 'weary' education workers, Simcoe County unions slam Ford announcement ([article](#))
- Re-establishing emergency child care in Muskoka will take time ([article](#))
- Bracebridge COVID-19 testing centre following new testing guidelines ([article](#))
- UPDATE: 8 more cases of COVID-19 reported at the Pines in Bracebridge among staff, residents ([article](#))
- Rulings give some clarity on vax mandates: experts ([article](#))
- 'Extremely effective': Stevenson Memorial Hospital flips switch on new UV light air purifiers ([article](#))
- Omicron is spreading too fast to test, Muskoka's top doc breaks down the changes to approach ([article](#))
- With testing restricted, employers told to be 'trusting' of workers who report COVID symptoms ([article](#))
- COVID outbreak confirmed on RVH's surgical unit ([article](#))
- Simcoe Muskoka health unit reports 637 new COVID-19 cases — mostly in 'fully vaccinated' residents ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Data

Ontario (As of January 6, 2022)

Total Cases	Active Cases (% change from previous week)	New cases Dec 26- Jan 1 (% change from previous week)	Total deaths (change from previous week)	Current Hospitalizations (Change from previous week)	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated* (Target 90%)
841,371	135,313 (+56)	87,470 (+110%)	10,272 (+93)	2,279 (+1,314)	88%

- Areas with the highest rate of active cases per 100,000 population are: Eastern Ontario (1,106), Hamilton (1002), Toronto (964), Lambton (950), Porcupine (932).

For more provincial data, see [Ontario COVID-19 case data](#), [Public Health Ontario Data Tool](#), [daily](#) and [weekly](#) epidemiologic summaries.

Canada (as of January 6, 2022)

Total Cases (includes confirmed and probable cases)	Active Cases (% change from previous week, not available)	New Cases in the last 7 days (% change from previous week, not available)	Total Deaths (change from previous week, not available)	Population 12+ fully vaccinated
2,394,674	360,452	292,204	30,524	87%

- A weekly epidemiological report is not available.

For more national data, see: [COVID-19 daily epidemiology update](#), [Canada COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiology Report](#)

Global (as of 17:13 pm CET, January 6, 2022)

Total confirmed cases	New Cases Dec 21 -Dec 27 (% change from previous week)	Total Deaths (change from previous week)
296,496,809	9,746,239 (+72%)	5,462,631 (+42,075)

Weekly highlights for December 27-January 2:

- Following a gradual increase since October, the global number of new cases increased sharply by 71% as compared to the previous week, while the number of new deaths decreased by 10%. This corresponds to just under 9.5 million new cases and over 41,000 new deaths reported during the last week. As of January 2, a total of nearly 289 million cases and just over 5.4 million deaths have been reported globally.
- All regions reported an increase in the incidence of weekly cases, with the Region of the Americas reporting the largest increase (100%), followed by the South-East Asia Region (78%) and the European Region (65%). The African Region reported a weekly increase in the number of new deaths (22%), while all the other regions reported a decrease as compared to the previous week.
- In the last week the highest number of cases were reported in: United States, India, Brazil, United Kingdom, and France.

For more international data, see: [WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#) and [WHO weekly epidemiological and Operational Updates](#)

Provincial, National and Global Updates (since December 30, 2021)

Provincial Updates

Ontario Government:

- Ontario Accelerating Boosters for Education and Child Care Staff ([news release](#))
- Ontario Temporarily Moving to Modified Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen ([news release](#))
- Updated Eligibility for PCR Testing and Case and Contact Management Guidance in Ontario ([backgrounder](#))
- Ontario Updating Public Health Measures and Guidance in Response to Omicron ([news release](#))

Public Health Ontario recently updated the following:

- How to Self-Monitor ([fact sheet](#))
- Optimizing the Use of Masks Against COVID-19 ([fact sheet](#))

National Updates

Government of Canada:

- The Government of Canada launches applications for the expanded Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit ([news release](#))
- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on December 30, 2021 ([statement](#))
- Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit ([backgrounder](#))

SMDHU Resources

Recent changes to the SMDHU [website](#):

COVID-19 Main Page

- I've been exposed to COVID-19 what do I do? ([link](#))
- Ontario updates public health measures and guidance in response to Omicron ([link](#))
- What to do if you have symptoms of COVID-19 ([link](#))
- Getting tested for COVID-19 ([link](#))
- My COVID-19 PCR or rapid antigen test was positive, now what? ([link](#))
- I live with someone who has symptoms of or has tested positive for COVID-19 ([link](#))
- I have been exposed to someone who has symptoms of or has COVID-19 who I don't live with ([link](#))

Stop the Spread

- Wearing a face covering in all indoor public spaces ([link](#))
- Gatherings, events and celebrating holidays ([link](#))
- Hunting and fishing ([link](#))
- COVID-19 Checklist for Planning a Wedding ([link](#))

COVID-19 Vaccinations

- Book your vaccination ([link](#))
 - Combining vaccines ([link](#))
 - Local GO-VAXX Bus Schedule ([link](#))
- Key things to know about COVID-19 vaccines ([link](#))
- Children 5 to 11 years ([link](#))

Going to School

- Families ([link](#))
- School administrators and educators ([link](#))

Operating your Business Safely and Partners and Municipalities

- COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination Requirement ([link](#))
- Mandatory face masks in indoor public spaces ([link](#))
- Resources for employers and workplaces ([link](#))

Guidance documents:

- Workplace Safety Plan, Screening & Proof of Vaccination ([link](#))
- Curling clubs ([link](#))
- Day Camps and Recreational Camps ([link](#))
- Facilities for Sports and Recreational Fitness Activities ([link](#))
- Food Operators ([link](#))
- Landlords and Property Managers ([link](#))
- Organized public events and gatherings ([link](#))
- Outdoor Recreational Amenities ([link](#))
- Personal Service Settings ([link](#))
- Recreational Water Facilities ([link](#))
- Farmers' Markets ([link](#))
- Food Banks and Donations Centres ([link](#))
- Faith-Based Organizations ([link](#))
- Retail businesses and shopping malls ([link](#))
- Warming Centres ([link](#))

Locations of COVID-19 PCR testing and assessment centres ([link](#))

HealthSTATS:

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#)

Enforcement ([link](#))

SMDHU Health Connection:

- **PLEASE READ BEFORE YOU CALL:** Our Health Connection phone line is experiencing a very high call volume which is impacting our response time and unfortunately your call may be disconnected. Due to our limited capacity, we cannot guarantee a response to voicemails or emails. For the most up-to-date information see our [COVID-19 webpages](#). If you have a health concern call your health care provider or Telehealth 1-866-797-0000.
- Call us at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520. Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or send an email to Health Connection using our [online form](#). Please note that at this time our response times are impacted by the demands of the COVID -19 pandemic, and our response times are longer than usual. Please only submit your inquiry once.

Credible Sources of Information

- [Ontario Ministry of Health](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Centre for Effective Practice COVID-19 Resource Centre](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)