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## COVID-19 – Update #35

### Revised Local Case & Contact Management Approach

### Due to large volumes of cases, not all cases and contacts will be reached by Public Health

**Attention:** Physicians, Emergency Departments, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse Practitioners, EMS, Designated Officers, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN, Beausoleil First Nation, Moose Deer Point First Nation, Rama First Nation, Wahta First Nation, Long-term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Hospices, Congregate Settings

**Date:** November 10, 2021

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#### Local Epidemiology & Reporting

For the week of October 31, 2021, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) reported 247 cases, an increase of 95% from the previous week (October 24 – 30). This represents the third consecutive week where case counts have increased in Simcoe Muskoka. Local incidence (40.9 cases per 100,000) is significantly higher than the province (22.3 cases per 100,000) and our surrounding public health units. The Delta variant remains the predominant circulating variant in our area, and the vaccine remains very effective against that strain. The most current case counts for laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases, in the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) region are available at [Simcoe Muskoka Health Stats](#) <sup>i</sup>

#### Revised Case & Contact Management Approach

With the high case counts, and consequently many identified high-risk contacts (HRCs) and potential exposure locations requiring follow up, effective today, SMDHU has had to modify Case & Contact Management processes to ensure that we can continue to reach new cases as quickly as possible. As such, the following measures have been put in place at this time:

- Priority remains reaching confirmed cases within 24-48 hours of lab receipt
  - Cases will receive an abridged case management interview
  - Cases will not be followed through to clearance from self-isolation by public health. They will be provided a date when they would be cleared at that interview.
  - Cases will be asked to notify their own close contacts based on the following criteria:
    - a) You were together for at least a cumulative (total) duration of 15 minutes regardless of if you were both wearing a mask; or
    - b) There was close physical contact such as hugging or kissing (regardless of whether you were both wearing a mask); or



c) You live in the same household as a case.

**Note:** wearing adequate personal protective equipment (at a minimum a medical mask and eye protection) means exposures are generally low risk. The close contact will be asked by case to [self-isolate](#)<sup>ii</sup> for 10 days from their last exposure and go for a COVID-19 test.

- Exposure site investigations and outbreak investigations are being prioritized based on vulnerability.
- Patients/staff identified as high-risk contacts through health care setting exposures will be referred to Provincial Work Force/Public Health Ontario Contact Tracing Program; and
- High-risk contacts (students) who are excluded from school/childcare will be notified of their need to self-isolate via communication (letter) from public health, sent home by their school or childcare.

**Due to the high volume of cases that continue to be reported, SMDHU may not have the capacity to follow up with all reported cases. Advise positive cases of COVID to [self-isolate](#) for 10 days from symptom onset. If no symptoms at time of testing, self-isolation will be from the date they tested positive. The cases should advise their high-risk contacts to go for testing and isolate for 10 days if they are symptomatic or unimmunized. Additional information regarding what individuals should do while awaiting test results and when test results are known can be found on the [Factsheet: Follow-up Instructions for Individuals Tests for COVID-19](#)<sup>iii</sup>**

### Outbreak Management Approach

Noting with the rising case counts and increased number of exposure settings, SMDHU's capacity to follow up in a timely way with exposure locations will be limited. If you are noting a cluster of cases related to a common exposure site, please call the Infectious Diseases team to report at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 extension 8809 during business hours. SMDHU will continue to prioritize outbreaks and exposure site investigations in settings based on vulnerability and SMDHU capacity.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.simcoemuskokahealthstats.org/topics/infectious-diseases/a-h/covid-19>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate.pdf?la=en>

<sup>iii</sup> [https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/COVID-/Assessment-Centre-and-testing/2020-06-02-tested\\_now-what---patient-handout\\_aoda-web.pdf?sfvrsn=24](https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/COVID-/Assessment-Centre-and-testing/2020-06-02-tested_now-what---patient-handout_aoda-web.pdf?sfvrsn=24)