

Dr. Charles Gardner, Medical Officer of Health  
Dr. Colin Lee, Associate Medical Officer of Health  
Dr. Lisa Simon, Associate Medical Officer of Health

## COVID-19 – Update #36

### Wave 7: High activity of transmission

### IPAC Recommendations for Health Care Settings: High Risk Period

### Decreased Public Health Capacity

**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, Municipalities

**Date:** July 21, 2022

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#### Local Epidemiology & Reporting

We are currently in our fourth week of increasing case counts which now marks Wave 7. The most recent reporting week (July 10 – July 16) had an incidence of 58.1 cases per 100,000 population which is an underestimation of the true number of cases, and we are seeing increasing numbers of confirmed outbreaks in our highest risk settings, as well as summer overnight camps. Our wastewater surveillance has also been increasing in the last few weeks. The peak of this wave is likely within 2 to 4 weeks, and, at this time, we would consider the community level of COVID activity to be high.

Wave 7 to date, predominantly fueled by the BA.5 sub-lineage of Omicron, has a higher proportion of confirmed cases who are hospitalized than Wave 6, yet average weekly hospitalizations remain lower than all waves except Wave 1. The proportion of ICU admissions and deaths remains generally low. Percent positivity was at 12.6% in Simcoe County and 8.7% in Muskoka for the week of July 10-16. The most current epidemiology for COVID-19 in the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) region is available at [Simcoe Muskoka HealthSTATS](#)

#### IPAC Recommendations in Healthcare Settings: High Risk Period

In April 2022, Public Health Ontario published the [Technical Brief: Interim Infection Prevention and Control Measures based on COVID-19 Transmission Risks in Health Care Settings](#). This document presents a framework for adjusting IPAC measures in the context of:

- high immunization rates among health care workers (HCW)
- continued efficacy of vaccines
- COVID-19 community incidence



In a High-Risk Period, as SMDHU currently is in, the following IPAC measures are recommended by the PHO document in all healthcare settings:

- Healthcare worker (HCW) masking in clinical and non-clinical areas
- Eye protection for HCWs when within 2 meters of any unmasked patient
- Patient masking for ambulatory patients or when HCW within 2 meters of patient
- Visitor and essential caregiver masking
- Limit occupancy of multi-bedded rooms if possible and/or use risk mitigation strategies
- Active screening of patients, visitors, and essential caregivers
- Limit visitation to essential caregivers and essential visitors who are up-to-date on vaccinations unless for compassionate reasons
- Limit in-person work and defer in-person social gatherings

### **Decreased Public Health Capacity**

SMDHU continues to modify its approach to the management of COVID-19 in highest risk and institutional settings. Due to the high volume of exposures and suspect outbreaks that continue to be reported, SMDHU may not have the capacity to follow up with all facilities. Infection prevention and control as well as outbreak control resources are available on our website.

- Congregate Settings such as group homes, shelters, and employers of international agricultural workers can access these resources at: <https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/COVID-19/Partners-and-Municipalities>
- Institutional Settings such as acute care, long-term care, and retirement homes can access these resources at:  
<https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/JFY/HPPortal/ResourcesTools/OutbreakResources.aspx>

Provincial resources for highest risk settings are also available at:

[https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019\\_guidance.aspx](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx)

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>