

COVID-19 Update for Partners

January 20, 2021

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Key messages from Dr. Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

Vaccine and Immunization update

- In less than a week, mobile teams from SMDHU in collaboration with RVH immunized 3,545 people in 30 long-term care homes (LTCH) with their first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. This includes all residents in LTCHs in Simcoe Muskoka who were eligible to be immunized as well as some long-term care (LTC) employees and essential caregivers.
- Based on the announced reduction in the number of vaccines received from Pfizer, we will be delaying immunization of residents in the region's 52 retirement homes until vaccine availability is stabilized.
- We want to acknowledge and extend thanks to the community partners including physicians, paramedics, nurse practitioners and other volunteers across our region in answering the call from SMDHU to support immunization of the most vulnerable people in our communities and their caregivers.
- A new immunization section on the [HealthSTATS COVID-19 page](#) includes:
 - Immunizations administered by priority group, for dose 1 and dose 2
 - Cumulative number of dose 1 administered
 - Immunizations administered by priority group by geography (Simcoe County and Muskoka District)

Local impact of Pfizer supply delays

- It is anticipated that temporary disruption in the global supply of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine could result in at least a 50% reduction in expected vaccine being delivered to Canada in the coming weeks. This reduction will severely impact local allocations of the vaccine into February. Anyone who is currently booked to receive their second dose of vaccine at 29 Sperling clinic this week will be notified if their appointment is rescheduled.
- Because of the temporary supply shortage some recipients of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine may have their second dose delayed up to 38 - 41 days after the first dose.
- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) an independent scientific body providing guidance to Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada has addressed questions about delaying the second dose of vaccine in [Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 Vaccines](#). The revised guidance supports the second dose to be

given according to the approved schedule when possible and within 42 days if not possible. NACI also advises that areas may consider delaying the second dose to within 42 days to increase the number of people who can be protected by getting the first dose of the vaccine.

- These NACI recommendations are consistent with the World Health Organization (WHO), and are supported by Canada's Chief Medical Officers of Health and the Ontario Ministry of Health.

Roberta Place Outbreak

- Under a Health Protection and Promotions Act (HPPA) Sec 29.2 order issued this past Saturday, Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital will provide leadership support at the facility, working with other organizations that have been providing assistance, including RVH, the County of Simcoe, Red Cross, Georgian College and Hospice Huronia. The order was issued to protect the home's residents and staff and support Roberta Place to contain the COVID-19 outbreak that has spread rapidly thorough the LTCH.
- Assistance includes ensuring that staffing, training, and equipment and supplies are in place so that the facility can continue to respond and to control the outbreak.
- RVH's Rapid Response Team has been onsite at the home, providing infection control and environmental services assessments, audits, education and hands-on training. RVH deployed a nursing swab-test team to the home.
- All eligible residents and staff at Roberta Place were administered Pfizer-BioNTech.
- This outbreak has created some fear in the community. Staff from Roberta Place and all LTCH and Retirement Homes (RH) need our support, not stigma. We must come together and support the staff of Roberta Place and other LTCH and RH. Worrying about coming in contact with an employee from a LTCH or RH is hurtful to those essential workers who look after seniors in our community every day.
- Preliminary laboratory testing has unfortunately identified a high likelihood that there is a COVID-19 variant in six swabs from Roberta Place. The variant strain testing is a two part test. The first test which looks for a particular 501 mutation is positive and indicates a very high probability that they are of a variant strain of concern. The second part of the test is a whole genome sequencing test to determine the exact COVID-19 strain. The results are expected in the next three to four days.
- A press conference ([YouTube](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)) about these findings ([media release](#)).

New strains of COVID-19

- As noted above, a new variant of COVID-19 has been detected in Simcoe County.
- There is evidence that the United Kingdom (UK) variant has the ability to spread quicker and more easily when compared to the original COVID-19 virus. Because of this, Ontario health officials predict the U.K. variant of COVID-19 could become the predominant strain of the disease in Ontario.
- The transmissibility of the new variants reinforces the importance of continuing public health measures to prevent transmission of the virus.
- Other variant strains from South Africa and Brazil have been identified as well. It is postulated that they may have similar increased contagiousness as the UK strain. At this time, there is no evidence showing that these variant strains increases the severity of illness.
- To date, no other variants have been confirmed in Ontario.

Enforcement and Complaints

- The [Enforcement and Complaints](#) section on our website now has more information on [regulations](#) from the province in [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#) and [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#).

- Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) have the power under the HPPA to order individuals, groups of people or businesses, to take or refrain from taking specific actions in respect of a communicable disease. Under the HPPA as well as under the Reopening Ontario Act, MOHs can issue instructions to businesses and organizations to take additional measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- All Section 22 orders and locally-issued Class Orders issued in response to COVID-19 are now listed on our COVID pages of the website under [Partners and Municipalities](#)
- Offences under the Reopening Ontario Act that have been issued by the Police or Municipal Provincial Offences Officers are not listed on our webpage as we do not have access to this information.

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

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of January 20, 2021 14:00)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
4,834	1,349	3,366	91
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last day there were 79 new cases, 3 people recovered and one person died. • Since the last Partner Update there have been almost 400 new cases, over 200 people have recovered, and 10 people have died. So far this week there have been 159 new cases reported to the health unit. • There are 144 more active cases in Simcoe Muskoka than there were one week ago. • There are 37 people hospitalized in Simcoe Muskoka. • There are 17 ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka (10 in institutional settings, 5 in workplace settings, 3 in congregate settings and 1 in a community setting). • The current percent positivity rate for COVID-19 tests is 3.0% for Simcoe County and 0.9% for Muskoka. The provincial percent positivity rate is 5.3% <p><u>Highlights from the week of January 10-16, 2021:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the first time in ten weeks, there was a decrease in the weekly number of cases with 450 new cases, representing a 9% decrease from the previous week. • The average daily growth in confirmed cases was 1.4% • COVID-19 infections in January reflect transmission from being in contact with another person who has the virus (50%) and from the community with no known source (25%) • There were 245 new COVID-19 tests per 10,000 population in Simcoe County and 131 tests per 10,000 population in Muskoka District for the most recent week. In comparison, the provincial testing rate was 289.5 tests per 10,000 population. • The weekly percent positivity in Simcoe Muskoka has been highest among children and youth under 20 years of age for the past two weeks. Testing rates remain highest among seniors 80 years of age and older. <p>SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page and the COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard</p>			

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Vaccine* Data (As of January 20, 2021 14:00)	
Total doses administered	Doses administered previous day
13,317	430
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 4700 immunizations have been provided since the last Partner Update. • 710 individuals have received both of the required doses of the vaccine. • 2845 (or 89%) long-term care residents have received their first dose. 	

Local Media Updates *(Since Jan. 13, 2021 Partner Update)*

- Severely diminished” vaccine supply has health unit rethinking local rollout ([article](#))
- All eligible residents in local LTCHs have been vaccinated ([article](#))
- Collingwood store charged for non-compliance with Reopening Ontario Act ([article](#))
- ‘The virus is at our doorstep and its coming in our house’: Physician helping at Barrie’s Roberta Place speaks about outbreak ([article](#))
- Rental restrictions, curfew a challenge for Innisfil ice-hut operators, bait shops ([article](#))
- ‘Online learning has been a nightmare’... ([article](#))
- COVID has made local opioid crisis ‘even more challenging’ ([article](#))
- Field hospital at RVH doing its part to free up capacity ([article](#))
- Nine dead, more than 100 infected in Barrie LTC home ([article](#))
- ‘We try to educate’: bylaw officers responded to 830 COVID-19 issues in 2020 ([article](#))
- ‘It’s not a perfect system’: Online learning posing challenges for families ([article](#))
- Huntsville long-term care homes celebrate 1st COVID-19 resident vaccines ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status

Ontario (As of January 20, 2021, 10:30)

Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
244,932	26,467	212,897	5,568

In the last week:

- There have been almost 20,000 new cases, over 22,000 recoveries, and 441 deaths

In the last day:

- There were 2,655 new cases, 3,714 resolved cases, and 89 deaths
- There are 3,100 fewer active cases in Ontario compared to the same day last week
- 54,307 tests completed, with a 4.9% positive rate
- 13,784 doses of vaccine were administered, with a total of 237,918 doses administered
- 32,361 people have received both vaccinations
- There were 1,598 people hospitalized, 395 people in ICU and 296 people on ventilators

Current Outbreaks

- There are currently 1,099 ongoing outbreaks including 520 in health care settings, 259 in workplace settings, 141 in group living settings, 117 in educational settings, 50 in recreational settings and twelve outbreaks categorized as unknown or other.

Highlights from January 3 to 9, 2021

- The rate of disease among cases aged 80 and over surpassed its peak during the first wave of the pandemic, with this week’s rate at 228.6 per 100,000 population. This increase may be a reflection that two-thirds of outbreak-associated cases were linked to outbreaks in long-term care and retirement home settings in the current week.

Regional updates

- Areas with the highest number of active cases per 100,000 population: Peel, Windsor-Essex, Toronto, Niagara, and Middlesex-London
- Areas with the highest number of active cases: Toronto (8,270), Peel (5,396), York (1,838), Windsor-Essex (1,447) and Niagara 1,316

For more provincial data see: [Ontario COVID-19 case data](#) and [Public Health Ontario Data Tool, Daily Epidemiologic Summaries](#), and [Weekly Epidemiologic Summaries](#)

Canada (As of January 20, 2021 at 19:00 EDT)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
725,495	68,413	638,620	18,462
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last week over 45,000 people tested positive for COVID-19, over 1,000 people died and over 50,000 people recovered. There are over 10,000 less people with active cases in the country than there was a week ago. <p><u>On January 20th, Canada reported:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5,744 new cases 196 deaths new cases in ON, QC, AB, BC, SK, MB, NB, and NS deaths in ON, QC, AB, BC, MB, and SK <p><u>January 3 - 9, 2021 weekly update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The daily number of new cases was over 4.5 times greater than the peak in April, with an average of 8,091 new cases (16% increase compared to the previous week). The average number of daily deaths increased 25% from 117 to 146. A total of 1,020 people died of COVID-19 during this week (24.1% increase from the previous week). All provinces and territories, with the exception of Northwest Territories, reported new cases and all provinces and territories except for Northwest Territories and Nunavut reported more deaths. Québec continues to report the highest total number of cases and the highest incident rate at 2,666.3 cases per 100,000 population. Over 50% of cases were in individuals under 40 years of age. The highest proportion of cases (20%) and the highest incidence rate (418.8) was observed in those 20 to 29 years of age. The case rate of COVID-19 among females 80 years and older is now higher than all other age groups by gender. There were 204 outbreaks reported in the previous week. There were 2,557 people hospitalized and 315 people with COVID-19 in ICU. According to forecasting, between 752,400 to 796,630 cumulative reported cases and 18,570 to 19,630 deaths are expected by January 24, 2021. <p>National daily epidemiology updates; National weekly epidemiology report</p>			
Global (As of January 20, 2021 at 20:36 CET)			
Confirmed Cases		Confirmed Deaths	
94,963,847		2,050,857	
<p><u>In the last day:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were over almost 500,000 new cases and almost 13,000 deaths. The US, UK, Brazil, France, and Russia, reported the most new cases and the UK, US, Germany, South Africa, and France reported the most deaths. <p><u>In the past week :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About 5 million new cases and 100,000 deaths were reported. The USA, Brazil, UK, Spain, and Russia had the most new cases and the USA, UK, Mexico, Brazil, and Germany had the most new deaths. 			

Highlights from Weekly Epidemiological Summary as of January 17, 2021:

- While new cases reported over the week decreased (-6%), new deaths climbed to a record high of 93,000, representing a 9% increase from the previous week.
- While the Americas, Europe and South-East Asia showed declines in cases, cases have begun increasing in the Eastern Mediterranean, African, and Western Pacific regions.
- All regions reported increases in deaths.

[WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#); [Previous Situation Reports](#)

Provincial, National and Global Updates *(Since Jan. 13, 2021 Partner Update)*

Provincial Updates

The Ontario Government:

- Achieves key milestone with vaccinations in long-term care ([news release](#))
- Adds over 500 hospital beds to expand critical care capacity ([news release](#))
- Invests in Peterborough-based producer of hand sanitizer and disinfectant bottles ([news release](#))
- Launches online security guard and private investigator testing ([news release](#))
- Opens applications for the COVID-19 relief fund on January 25, 2021 to Francophone non-profit organizations ([news release](#))
- Extends Reopening Ontario Act Orders ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Member of Ontario's vaccination task force resigns after travel outside country ([article](#))
- Ontario discovers 76 violations during safety blitz of big-box stores ([article](#))
- Ontario sees 2,665 new COVID-19 cases; more workplace enforcement to begin ([article](#))
- Emergence of new strain could cause Ontario's COVID case load to explode ([article](#))
- Ontario seniors 'living in fear' of COVID-19 feel forgotten in vaccine rollout plan ([article](#))
- Ontario to open dedicated pandemic hospital in Vaughan as COVID-19 surges ([article](#))

National Updates

From the Government of Canada:

- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on [January 20, 2021](#), [January 19, 2021](#), [January 18, 2021](#), [January 17, 2021](#), [January 16, 2021](#)
- Invests in national clinical trials network to address the pandemic ([news release](#))
- [Statement](#) of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers of Health on COVID-19 immunization

Other National News:

- Coronavirus: What's happening in Canada and around the world on Wednesday ([article](#))
- What's different about the coronavirus 'variants of concern' flagged by WHO ([article](#))
- Citing threat from COVID-19 variants, Quebec calls on Ottawa to ban travel ([article](#))
- Trudeau insists vaccination effort is on track despite supply disruption ([article](#))
- Trudeau says travel rules could change suddenly, urges Canadians not to travel ([article](#))
- Scientists still researching whether vaccine prevents COVID-19 transmission ([video](#))
- Kids Help Phone sees increase in youth struggling ([video](#))
- COVID-19 modelling shows pandemic resurgence in Canada rapidly worsening ([article](#))
- Trudeau 'open to strengthening' international travel measures ([article](#))
- Canada's chief statistician ranks top 10 trends of 2020 ([article](#))
- Federal, provincial governments beef up funding for farmers ([article](#))

- Check out these cool Canadian backyard rinks ([article](#))

Global Updates

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Presents lessons learned, key resources and conclusions about Children, COVID-19, and transmission in schools in a special focus section of their weekly epidemiological report ([article](#)).
- Convened global meetings to discuss the emerging variants of COVID-19 and to discuss knowledge gaps and research priorities. Since January, 60 countries have reported cases of the variant from the U.K., and 23 countries have cases of the variant from South Africa. Both variants have shown increased transmissibility. Two new variants identified in Japan (B.1.1.28) and Brazil (P.1) were also discussed ([Emergency meeting on COVID-19 variants](#), [Research forum](#)).
- Scientists tackle vaccine safety, efficacy and access ([news release](#))

WHO published:

- Tips for professionals reporting on COVID-19 vaccines ([webpage](#))
- COVID-19 Global Risk Communication and Community Engagement Strategy, December 2020 – May 2021 ([Interim Guideline](#))
- Episode #20 and #21 of Science in 5: [COVID-19 Variants and Vaccines](#) and [Origins of SARS-CoV-2 virus](#)
- Journalism in a pandemic: Covering COVID-19 now and in the future – A self-directed course for journalists ([online course](#))
- Aide-memoire: Infection prevention and control (IPC) principles and procedures for COVID-19 vaccination activities ([publication](#))
- Background document on mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 (Pfizer-BioNTech) against COVID-19 ([technical document](#))

SMDHU Resources

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#)
- [SMDHU Vulnerable Populations for COVID-19 Response Interactive Map](#) highlights vulnerable populations in Simcoe Muskoka.
- Current COVID-19 information is available on our [website](#), which has been revised to include information about the Provincial declaration of emergency. Most recently, updates were made to reflect the provincial shutdown and stay at home orders. Pages revised to reflect information about the shutdown and stay at home orders include:
 - [Ice Fishing Operators](#)
 - [Retail Operators](#)
 - [Short-Term Rental & Other Shared Accommodations](#)
 - [Face Covering FAQ](#)
 - [Outdoor skating](#)
 - [Outdoor Winter Trail Amenities](#)
 - [Events and gatherings](#)

Other changes include:

- **Added** Class Order [Operator of Roberta Place Long-Term Care Home](#)
- **Added** [Class Order Rescinded - Simcoe Manor Home for the Aged](#)
- **Added** [Class Order for Operator of Simcoe Manor Home for the Aged](#)
- **Added** [enforcement information and table](#)

- SMDHU Health Connection responds to calls and emails about COVID-19. Contact Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 ext. 5829 or via [email](#).
Health Connection Hours:
 - Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Credible Sources of Information

- [Ontario Ministry of Health](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)