

COVID-19 Update for Partners

January 27, 2021

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Key messages from Dr. Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

New Strain of COVID-19 UK Variant in our Communities

- On the weekend, seven cases of the UK variant of COVID-19 were confirmed in Simcoe County. Six of these cases are associated with Roberta Place Long-term Care Home (LTCH). The other case is in an individual who had close contact with someone associated with the outbreak at Bradford Valley Care Community LTCH.
- At this time our investigation continues on a number of fronts, including:
 - Ongoing assessment of cases associated with Roberta Place and Bradford Valley;
 - Mapping cases to determine household clusters; and
 - Network analysis of the transmission of the variant strain within Roberta Place and Bradford Valley as well as within the community.
- **Public Health Ontario** conducted a point prevalence study (a one-day snapshot to see how many tests from one day are of a variant of COVID-19) last week. Though not all tests have been completed, to date, preliminary results show:
 - An additional 99 people in Simcoe County have a variant of COVID-19;
 - Almost all are in individuals linked to the Roberta Place outbreak;
 - Two of the people with infection from variant strains have no known link to the outbreaks in LTCH in Simcoe County; and
 - One of these variant cases is associated with Waypoint Outbreak.
- We need to assume that a variant of this virus is in our communities and do everything we can protect ourselves and others. As this strain of COVID-19 is more contagious it is even more important that people in Simcoe Muskoka take all measures possible to prevent the spread of the virus. The only way this virus can continue to spread is through the movement of people. I urge everyone to **stay home** except for essential reasons (i.e., groceries, health care, essential work, physical activity). Now is not the time for visiting family or friends outside of your household. Ensure physical distancing and masking guidance is followed at all times when outside of the home.

Vaccine Supply Update – Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine

We anticipate the temporary interruption in the supply of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine globally will greatly impact the amount of vaccine we will receive locally in February.

Our plan is to ensure we can protect our most vulnerable, high-risk populations. This means:

- First dose vaccines, at the Immunization Clinic on Sperling Drive in Barrie, and through the Mobile Immunization Team, will be temporarily paused and the clinic will temporarily close (effective Jan. 21st) and not re-open for any scheduled appointments until supply increases and is stabilized.
- Second vaccine doses, for health care workers who received their first dose of the vaccine after December 30th, 2020, will be delayed up to 42 days.
- LTCH residents and Retirement Home (RH) residents who have received their first dose, will receive their second dose 21 to 27 days after their first dose.
- We continued to immunize RH residents in Simcoe Muskoka through the mobile immunization clinic in collaboration with RVH and we anticipate completion of immunizations in all high-risk RH by the end of this week.

City of Barrie Amplifies Message of “Stay at Home” with Videos for you to Share

- The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) supports the City of Barrie who have planned communications about how serious transmission of the COVID-19 variant could become in our community and the potential devastating effects. The city encourages residents to share these important messages by sharing the videos (Mayor Jeff Lehman’s video [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#); another [video](#)).

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

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of January 27, 2021 14:00)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
5,242	1,151	3,925	134
4,834	1,349	3,366	91

In the last day:

- 40 new cases, 99 people recovered and three people died

Since the last Partner Update:

- There have been over 400 new cases, over 550 people have recovered, and 43 people have died.
- So far this week there have been 97 new cases reported to the health unit.
- There are 198 fewer active cases in Simcoe Muskoka than there were one week ago.
- There are 37 people hospitalized.
- There are 22 ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka (11 in institutional settings, 7 in workplace settings, 3 in congregate settings and 1 in a community setting).
- The current percent positivity rate in Simcoe County is 3.5% and 0.4% in Muskoka District compared to the provincial percent positivity rate of 4.6%.
- The weekly percent positivity in Simcoe Muskoka has been highest among youth 10-19 years of age for the past four weeks. The weekly positivity rate among seniors 80 years of age and older has increased each of the past three weeks.
- Since mid-December, 23% of Simcoe Muskoka cases have reported attending at least one holiday gathering with non-household members, with attendance at gatherings peaking at one-third (34%) of cases during the week of January 3 to January 9th.

SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#) and the [COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard](#)

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Vaccine* Data (As of January 27, 2021 14:00)

Total doses administered	Doses administered previous day
15,759	394
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 2,500 immunizations have been provided since the last Partner Update. • Nearly 90% or 2846 residents of LTCH in Simcoe Muskoka have received their first dose of the vaccine. • Approximately half of all long-term care staff, essential caregivers and hospital employees and physicians have received their first dose of the vaccine. • More than one-third of all RH staff and essential caregivers have also received the first dose of the vaccine. • Nearly 5000 Simcoe Muskoka LTCH & RH staff and essential caregivers, have received their first dose of vaccine. • 964 individuals have received their second required dose. • Over 5,200 hospital workers and residents in alternate level of care (ALC) in Simcoe Muskoka have received their first dose of the vaccine. 	

Local Media Updates (Since Jan. 20, 2021 Partner Update)

- Health officials investigating possibility of U.K. variant at second Ont. LTC home ([article](#))
- More robust testing for UK variant needed to show community spread ([article](#))
- Administering vaccine made Orillia nurse 'goosebumpy all over' ([article](#))
- Website launches to assist Simcoe North businesses through the pandemic ([article](#))
- LTC homes in York-Simcoe getting \$666K from province to help battle COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Muskoka Family Network is here to assist with important family resources ([article](#))
- "If it isn't there now, it very well could be soon," Health Unit's top doctor says of UK COVID-19 variant ([article](#))
- What are the long-term effects of COVID-19 and is the damage permanent? ([article](#))
- Town of Gravenhurst confirms staff member positive for COVID-19, Jan. 26 ([article](#))
- No plans to close Muskoka snowmobile trails yet in COVID lockdown: Gardner ([article](#))
- Pandemic's impact 'negligible' at Lake Simcoe airport, official says ([article](#))
- Local help, not the military, is best for Roberta Place ([article](#))
- Wahta First Nation copes with first three COVID cases since pandemic began ([article](#))
- Vulnerable residents of Rama have received first dose of vaccine ([article](#))
- Rerouted vaccine shipment, late orders meant deadly delay ([article](#))
- United Kingdom (UK) COVID-19 variant identified at long-term care home ([news release](#))
- Simcoe Muskoka schools to continue online learning until February 10 ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status

Ontario (As of January 27, 2021, 10:30)			
Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
260,370	21,774	232,480	5,958
244,932	26,467	212,897	5,568
In the last day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 1,670 new cases, 2,725 resolved cases, and 49 deaths. • There are over 4,500 fewer active cases in Ontario compared to the same day last week. • There were 1,382 people hospitalized, 377 in intensive care units (ICU) and 291 on ventilators. 			

- There were 493 ongoing outbreaks in health care settings (245 in LTCH, 154 in RH, 94 in hospitals)
- The current effective reproduction number is 0.87
- Over 55,000 people were tested. The daily percent positivity is 4%.

In the last week:

- There have been almost 15,500 new cases, almost 20,000 recoveries, and almost 400 deaths.

Vaccines:

- Yesterday 9,513 doses of vaccine were administered, with a total of 305,330 doses administered.
- 96,459 people in Ontario have received both vaccinations.

Regional updates

- Areas with the highest number of active cases per 100,000 population: Peel (328.35), Toronto (272.11), Niagara(212.11), Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (185.26), and Windsor-Essex (183.98)
- Areas with the highest number of active cases: Toronto (7,433), Peel (4,537), York (1,571), Ottawa (958), and Niagara (950)

Highlights from January 10 - 16, 2021 Weekly Epidemiological Summary

- There were fewer cases reported this week than the previous week, with 85% of health units reporting a downward trend in the rate of disease.
- There were significantly fewer deaths reported (88 down from 221)
- The UK variant has been reported in 5 health unit regions (Durham, York, Toronto, Peel and Middlesex-London), with the current case count at 14 (based on 2,834 specimens screened)
- Neighbourhoods with greater diversity had an increase in number of cases while those with the least diversity had decreased numbers of cases.
- Neighbourhoods experiencing the most material deprivation continue to experience more cases than neighbourhoods with less material deprivation.

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 26, 2021 at 19:00 EDT)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
757,022	59,551	678,068	19,403
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last week over 31,000 people tested positive for COVID-19, almost 1,000 people died and almost 40,000 people recovered. • There are almost 9,000 less people with active cases of COVID-19 in the country than there was a week ago. 			
<u>January 26th, Canada reported:</u>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,011 new cases • 165 deaths • new cases in ON, QC, BC, AB, SK, MB, NB, and NS • deaths in ON, QC, BC, SK, AB, and MB 			

Between Jan 11th and Jan 18th

- The number COVID-19 patients hospitalized decreased from 4,021 to 3,881.
- The number COVID-19 patients in ICU beds decreased from 881 to 868 beds.
- The number of COVID-19 patients mechanically vented increased from 457 to 483.

Weekly update: January 10 - 16, 2021

- New cases and deaths decreased compared to the previous week.
- There was an average of 7,108 new cases reported each day (12% decrease compared to the previous week).
- The average number of daily deaths decreased slightly to 143 from 146.
- All provinces and territories, with the exception of Yukon and Nunavut reported new cases, while deaths were reported in seven of ten provinces and no territories.
- Saskatchewan and Manitoba were the only provinces reporting an increase of cases compared to the previous week.
- The number of hospitalizations continue to rise and is now 1.6 times greater than the first peak in May. As of January 15, there were 4,767 people hospitalized and 879 people in ICU, an 8% and 7% increase compared to the previous week.
- Over 54% individuals with new reported cases of COVID-19 were under 40 years of age, including:
 - 17% under 20 years of age;
 - 20% between 20 to 29 years of age; and
 - 17% between 30 to 39 years of age.
- According to forecasting, between 761,230 to 808,620 cumulative reported cases and 19,680 to 20,620 deaths are expected by January 31, 2021.

National [daily epidemiology updates](#); National [weekly epidemiology report](#)

Global (As of January 27, 2021 at 11:55 CET)

Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
99,638,507	2,141,468

In the last day:

- There were over 410,000 new cases and over 10,000 deaths.
- The US, Brazil, UK, Russia, and Indonesia reported the most new cases and the US, Germany, Mexico, Brazil, and the UK, reported the most deaths.

In the past week :

- Over 4.6 million new cases and over 90,000 deaths were reported.
- The US, Brazil, UK, Spain, and Russia had the most new cases and the US, Mexico, UK, Brazil, and Germany had the most new deaths.

Highlights from Weekly Epidemiological Summary as of January 24, 2021:

- Globally, new cases continue to decline after global case incidence peaked in the first week of January 2021. However this downward trend only reflects relative reductions in case incidence in several countries that have contributed the highest numbers in recent months, but hides continued upward trends in other countries in the same regions.
- 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.
- The Americas and Europe reported 86% of all new cases globally in the past week.

[WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#); [Weekly Epidemiological and Operational Updates](#)

Provincial, National and Global Updates *(Since Jan. 20, 2021 Partner Update)*

Provincial Updates

The Ontario Government:

- Expands COVID-19 Inspections to Farming Operations ([news release](#))
- Makes steady progress testing travelers at Pearson; calls on federal government to take further action ([news release](#))
- Supports modernization of small and rural communities ([news release](#))
- Supports the development of the next generation of PPE ([news release](#))
- Adjusts vaccination plan in response to Pfizer-BioNTech shipment delays ([news release](#))
- Marks one year anniversary of the first COVID-19 case in Ontario ([news release](#))
- Says safety of schools remains priority number one for Ontario ([news release](#))
- Expands eligibility for emergency child care ([backgrounder](#))
- Expands big-box blitz to Ottawa, Windsor, Niagara and Durham regions ([news release](#))
- Opens COVID-19 isolation centres in hardest hit communities ([news release](#))
- Launches pilot program to train personal support workers ([news release](#))
- Adding more mental health beds and programs for seniors ([news release](#))
- Reminds public to stay home and travel only when necessary ([news release](#))
- Expands workplace enforcement campaigns ([news release](#))
- Announces over 100,000 students return to class ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- COVID-19: Tougher travel restrictions on the way; Ontario reports 1,740 new cases, Ottawa shows another drop ([article](#))
- Ontario government calls on feds to impose temporary ban on direct flights from countries with new COVID-19 strains ([article](#))
- 'It's a crisis situation,' 300+ doctors and advocates call on Ford to act now to control COVID-19 in LTC homes ([article](#))
- Ontario says 2.26% of tests at Pearson positive ([article](#))
- As doctors urge more COVID-19 testing in schools, millions sit unused ([article](#))
- Teen cleaner who worked at Ontario long-term care home dies ([article](#))
- Ford government calling on influencers to urge Ontarians to stay home ([article](#))
- Ontario couple charged after allegedly misleading contact tracers ([article](#))
- Ontario urged to suspend need for consent before withdrawing life support when COVID crushes hospitals ([article](#))
- 182 Canada Post workers test positive for COVID at Mississauga plant; 34 cases of a COVID-19 variant confirmed in Canada; 'Don't book a trip for spring break,' ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- Invites You to Celebrate the Joys of Winter virtually at the 43rd annual **Winterlude**, February 5–21, 2021 ([news release](#))
- Released statements from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada: [January 27](#), [January 26](#), [January 25](#), [January 24](#), [January 23](#), [January 21](#), and [January 22, 2021](#)
- Invests in innovative life science and virtual healthcare technologies ([news release](#))
- Grants close to \$3 million to help four organizations in Quebec maintain their activities and invest in their tourism facilities ([news release](#))
- Provides Mobile Health Units to assist Ontario with COVID-19 response ([news release](#))
- Releases COVID-19 Update for Indigenous Peoples and communities ([news release](#))
- Invests in national clinical trials network to address COVID-19 pandemic ([news release](#))

- Published draft legislative proposals to adjust certain deductions for employment insurance and COVID-19 benefits ([news release](#))

Other National News:

- What you need to know for January 27 ([article](#))
- Ont. doctor suggests cancelling March Break to prevent another COVID-19 spike ([article](#))
- Provinces sitting on millions in unspent federal pandemic spending, report says ([article](#))
- Canadian military dealing with surge in new COVID-19 infections ([article](#))
- Canada scrambling for smaller syringes ahead of expected vaccine label change ([article](#))
- Calgary company begins human clinical trials for its COVID-19 vaccine candidate ([article](#))
- Crime down in first eight months of pandemic, but mental-health calls rise ([article](#))
- Quebec to exempt homeless from curfew; court finds measure endangers safety ([article](#))
- Canadians urged to cancel travel plans ([article](#))
- Couple accused of flying to Yukon for vaccine 'despicable': B.C. minister ([article](#))
- After weeks with no COVID cases, Nunavut community sees new infections ([article](#))
- Moderna vaccine expected to protect against new COVID-19 variant ([article](#))
- What the science says on travel bans ([article](#))
- Cancel travel plans; data reveals 1M travelled over holidays ([article](#))
- Should governments name workplaces that have COVID-19 outbreaks? The pros and cons according to experts ([article](#))
- Ways to help kids express their feelings about the pandemic through art ([article](#))
- Canada's COVID-19 case numbers show early positive signs ([article](#))
- Why the world won't go back to 'some sense of normal' until all countries are vaccinated ([article](#))
- Tam asks faith leaders to remain 'vigilant', promote vaccine acceptance ([article](#))
- How worried should Canadians be about the B.1.1.7 coronavirus variant? ([article](#))
- Experts say pandemic fueling apparent spike in eating disorders ([article](#))
- Vaccine may be less effective against variant found in South Africa ([article](#))

Global Updates

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Provided an update on SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern ([Weekly Epidemiological Update: special focus update](#))
- Vaccine Safety Committee met to review reports of deaths of very frail elderly ([statement](#))
- Recommends follow-up care, low-dose anticoagulants for COVID-19 patients ([article](#))
- Continues using chatbot to tackle COVID-19 misinformation and plans to carry out a formal assessment of the chatbox initiative ([p.10 Weekly Operational Update](#))
- Updated Children, COVID-19, and transmission in schools ([Weekly Epidemiological Update: special focus update](#))

WHO published:

- The Moderna COVID-19 (mRNA-1273) vaccine: what you need to know ([feature story](#); [interim recommendations](#); [draft background document](#))
- Online global consultation on contact tracing for COVID-19 ([overview](#))
- The WHO COVID-19 vaccine safety surveillance manual ([overview](#))
- Country in focus: early implementation of WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health in Ukraine ([feature story](#))
- Science in 5, episode 22: *Children & COVID-19* ([video](#)) ([YouTube](#))

Other International news:

- 10 reports of anaphylaxis out of over 4 million doses administered, after administration of the first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine ([news release](#))

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](#). Recent changes include:
 - [Main COVID](#)
 - New expander bar [United Kingdom variant of COVID-19 in the region](#)
 - [Vaccine and Immunization](#)
 - Revised [Vaccine rollout in Ontario](#), [local vaccine rollout](#), [Timing of second dose](#)
 - New [FAQ COVID-19 Vaccination Roll Out](#)
 - [Partners and Municipalities](#): Revised [Class Order for Grace Baptist Church](#)
 - [Operating your Business Safely](#)
 - Replaced signs: **STOP You must wear a face covering at this site** (*Updated January 25, 2021*): English [full colour](#) / [black and white](#); Francais [tout en couleur](#) / [noir et blanc](#)
 - [Enforcement and Complaints](#)
 - Added new business to enforcement chart
 - New HealthFax
 - [UK Variant: Revised Mitigation Strategies for Community-Spread](#)
 - [COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #4](#)
- 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](#)