



Huron Perth Public Health

Report of the Medical Officer of Health

June 4, 2021

Health Protection

COVID-19 Update

The third 'wave' of the COVID pandemic continued into spring in Ontario. On May 13, Ontario extended the stay-at-home order for an additional two weeks until at least June 2nd. All public health and workplace safety measures under the province-wide emergency brake were to remain in effect, and schools to remain closed with continuation of virtual learning.

Ontario's total daily cases (and hospitalizations) of COVID-19 dropped slowly and steadily in May, with a daily count of 1,273 on May 28 (total cases 528,453).

On May 20th, the Ontario Science Advisory Table (OSAT) provided an update (<https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/sciencebrief/update-on-covid-19-projections-8/>) - with the following Key Findings

- Cases, positivity and hospitalization rates are decreasing. Control of the pandemic is improving due to current public health measures and the efforts of Ontarians.
- The access to care deficit continues but high-priority surgeries are being performed at higher rates.
- Maintaining progress on vaccinations and maintaining some public health measures until mid-June can help ensure a good summer:
 - School re-opening will create an increase in cases, but this may be manageable.
 - Outdoor activities are much safer than indoor activities and should be encouraged.

Premier Ford released the government's three step Roadmap to Reopen, also on May 20th.

- Step One (assuming 60 percent of adults vaccinated with one dose): Resume outdoor activities with small crowds where the risk of transmission is lower and permit retail with restrictions. Allow outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people, outdoor dining with up to four people per table and non-essential retail at 15 per cent capacity.
- Step Two (assuming 70 percent of adults vaccinated with one dose and 20 percent vaccinated with two doses): Further expand outdoor activities and resume limited indoor services with small numbers of people where face coverings are worn, including outdoor gatherings of up to 25 people, outdoor sports and leagues, personal care services where face coverings can be worn and with capacity limits, as well as indoor religious services, rites or ceremony gatherings at 15 per cent capacity.
- Step Three (assuming 70 to 80 percent of adults vaccinated with one dose and 25 percent vaccinated with two doses): Expand access to indoor settings, with restrictions, including where there are larger numbers of people and where face coverings can't always be worn, including indoor sports and recreational fitness; indoor dining, museums, art galleries and libraries, and casinos and bingo halls, with capacity limits.
- Ontario will remain in each step of the reopening for 21 days to evaluate any impacts on key public health and health system indicators. If at the end of the 21 days, the vaccination thresholds have been met, along with positive trends in other key public health and health system indicators, then the province will move to the next step.

Ontario continued its aggressive COVID vaccine program as supplies permitted, expanding to Ontarians 18+ booking as of May 18 and to Youth 12 + (both ahead of schedule). As of May 28th, at least 65 % of Ontarians (aged 18 and older) have received at least one dose of vaccine

HPPH experienced a surge of cases in May; there was sufficient Case and Contact Management capacity to respond to the increase in cases, many of which were related to workplace outbreaks. As of May 28th, HPPH reported a total of 1789 positive results with 41 active cases, 0 current hospitalization (71 total), 1 active cases in Health Care Workers (235 total) and 57 deaths. There is one Retirement Home outbreak (Goderich Place; 1 staff and 1 resident), and 6 workplace outbreaks.

Here is a snapshot of COVID cases and hospital capacity taken from the Ontario Health website on May 28th:

| Snapshot | | | | | | | Page | → | Data As Of: | 2021 |
|----------|-------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|------|---|-------------|------|
| LHIN | Master PHUs | COVID Response Level | Incidence (Weekly New Cases per 100k) | % Positivity (7d Avg - Interim Data) | ICU Occupancy | Acute Occupancy | | | | |
| 01 ESC | Chatham-Kent HU | 5 - Lockdown | 6.5 | 0.82% | 95% | 88% | | | | |
| 01 ESC | Lambton HU | 5 - Lockdown | 37.4 | 1.67% | 86% | 75% | | | | |
| 01 ESC | Windsor-Essex HU | 5 - Lockdown | 60.3 | 5.39% | 71% | 91% | | | | |
| 02 SW | Grey Bruce HU | 5 - Lockdown | 19.4 | 1.99% | 75% | 72% | | | | |
| 02 SW | Huron-Perth HU | 5 - Lockdown | 27.9 | 2.61% | 77% | 66% | | | | |
| 02 SW | Middlesex-London HU | 5 - Lockdown | 78.2 | 4.62% | 76% | 81% | | | | |
| 02 SW | Southwestern PH | 5 - Lockdown | 34.5 | 3.74% | 74% | 74% | | | | |
| 03 WW | Waterloo PH | 5 - Lockdown | 67.4 | 6.04% | 69% | 75% | | | | |
| 03 WW | Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph HU | 5 - Lockdown | 57.4 | 9.12% | 89% | 84% | | | | |
| 04 HNHB | Brant HU | 5 - Lockdown | 66.4 | 4.83% | 65% | 79% | | | | |
| 04 HNHB | Haldimand-Norfolk HU | 5 - Lockdown | 51.7 | 3.08% | 75% | 85% | | | | |
| 04 HNHB | Hamilton HU | 5 - Lockdown | 121.6 | 7.37% | 83% | 94% | | | | |
| 04 HNHB | Niagara HU | 5 - Lockdown | 66.7 | 5.52% | 87% | 80% | | | | |

The Vaccine Team (as guided by the Huron Perth Mass Vaccination Advisory Committee), together with many partners (including Primary Care, Paramedic Services, Municipalities, Volunteers) continues to successfully administer every dose received; vaccine doses delivered as of May 27th:

70,794 doses administered in HP by HPPH, PC and Pharmacies

76,711 total doses given to HP residents

Coverage of at least one dose in population 16+ years (%)

80+ yrs = 95.0

75 – 79 = 93.5

70 – 74 = 94.9

65 – 69 = 88.8

60 – 64 = 78.2

55 – 59 = 69.9

16 – 54 = 35.6

TOTAL = 58.2 (2 doses = 4.9 %)

According to the **PHO SURVEILLANCE REPORT. COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake in Ontario: Dec 14, 2020 to May 22, 2021:**

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/epi/covid-19-vaccine-uptake-ontario-epi-summary.pdf?la=en>

| % coverage | ON | HPPH |
|-------------------|-----------|--------|
| At least one dose | 50.7 | 46.4 |
| 2 doses | 3.6 | 4.2 |
| Total # doses | 8,069,397 | 63,950 |

Population includes entire population

The gap between HPPH and the province in May is due to the prioritized vaccine allotments to hot spot areas, and we expect that the gap will be closed as vaccine supplies increase in June.

The Communications Team is focusing on supporting vaccination rollout as well as the cautious, measured re-opening of different sectors in Huron-Perth.

Communications needs around vaccination rollout currently include:

- News release and additional promotion for the primary care Moderna Clinic June 4
- Messaging around eligibility for extended and shortened second-dose intervals
- Messaging on age limits for Pfizer and Moderna
- Vaccine confidence - based on the experience of other Public Health Units, we anticipate that we may start to see vaccine hesitancy once the majority of the vaccine-eager have received their first doses.
- Celebrating vaccination milestones, in order to document the vaccination rollout in Huron-Perth as well as support vaccine confidence campaigns.

As the province prepares to implement the three-step Roadmap to Reopen, the communications team is also working closely with the Environmental Health team to ensure sectors in Huron-Perth are updated with the latest information, and that legislative requirements are understood.

Messaging continues to be distributed through multiple mass communication platforms (online, print, radio, etc.) as well as stakeholder meetings and individual replies to phone calls, emails and social media messages from Huron-Perth residents.

The communications team continues to encourage kindness, patience and cooperation in all messaging.

The OSAT released a brief on data that showed the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a 12.8% increase in the number of deaths, compared to data from previous years. The causes of these excess deaths include infection with SARS-CoV-2, mortality due to non-COVID-19 causes reflecting the impact of delays in care for conditions such as cancer and cardiovascular disease, in addition to other indirect effects of the pandemic, such as the increase in opioid-related death.

At this time, HPPH staff have accrued > 31,699.58 hours of overtime in the pandemic response.

Health Promotion

In collaboration with the Municipality of North Perth, a second sharps kiosk has been installed in Listowel. The kiosk was installed based on need and is right beside the first kiosk. All kiosk locations can be found on our website. A new report from the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network, Public Health Ontario and the Office of the Chief Coroner shows opioid-related deaths surged during the pandemic.

HPPH and Huron and Perth EarlyON are working together to pilot *Something for You & the Kiddos too!* A six week, one hour online forum that will allow moms to connect with one another, chat, share challenges and celebrate what has gone well. Staff in this program were noticing a community theme happening in the families that they have been connecting with of a strong need for social connection and sense of belonging during this challenging time. This program provides this opportunity as well as a way for us to connect with some families that we previously had on caseload.

The ePrenatal Classes have been a valuable method for HPPH to continue to provide essential prenatal information to expectant families in Huron and Perth Counties during the pandemic as in-person classes were suspended. 140 individuals have already created an account in 2021. In 2020, of the 282 who registered and were issued a code, 230 individuals created an account with the Injoy ePrenatal Program. A survey of the ePrenatal program was completed from August 2020 - January 2021 with an impressive response rate of just under 30%. The Final report is in process.

Respectfully submitted by Dr Miriam Klassen, MOH & CEO