



# Huron Perth Public Health

## Report of the Medical Officer of Health

October 3, 2021

### Health Protection

#### COVID-19 Update

The COVID-19 pandemic in Ontario continues to be the main focus of public health work. Since the last board report, daily case counts increased to a high of 944 on September 4. Since then case counts have varied between a low of 463 on Sept 22 and a high of 864 on Sept 16. The impact of school reopening (with increased contacts) and the fall weather (with more time indoors) is expected to drive further transmission, while increasing vaccination rates and ongoing public health measures (such as masking indoors and Safety Plans for all businesses and organizations permitted to be open) are expected to protect against transmission.

On September 1st the Provincial government announced plans to launch a vaccine certificate and verification program. As of September 22, 2021, Ontarians will need to be fully vaccinated (two doses plus 14 days) and provide proof of vaccination along with ID to access certain public settings and facilities. This approach focuses on indoor public settings where face coverings cannot always be worn and where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is higher, including:

- Restaurants and bars (excluding outdoor patios, as well as delivery and takeout);
- Nightclubs (including outdoor areas of the establishment);
- Meeting and event spaces, such as banquet halls and conference/convention centres;
- Facilities used for sports and fitness activities and personal fitness training, such as gyms, fitness and recreational facilities with the exception of youth recreational sport;
- Sporting events;
- Casinos, bingo halls and gaming establishments;
- Concerts, music festivals, theatres and cinemas;
- Strip clubs, bathhouses and sex clubs;
- Racing venues (e.g., horse racing).

These requirements will not apply to outdoor settings where the risk of transmission is lower, including patios, with the exception of outdoor nightclub spaces given the risk associated with the setting.

These requirements will also not apply to settings where people receive essential services such as medical care, food from grocery stores and medical supplies. Aligned with current public health measures already in place, indoor masking policies will continue to remain in place. The vaccine certificate requirements will only apply to those individuals eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and will not apply to children under the age of 12 and those with documented medical exemptions.

The government also moved forward with a 3-dose series of COVID-19 vaccine for residents of LTCHs, High Risk Retirement Homes, Elder Care Lodges and certain immunocompromising conditions.

The COVID-19 Science Table Daily dashboard is a good source of data that includes cases, hospitalizations, deaths, effective reproduction number, and vaccination rates: <https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/ontario-dashboard/>

Here is a screen shot taken on September 24<sup>th</sup>:

## Current Status in Ontario

<i>Key Indicators</i>	
Effective Reproduction Number R(t), on 20-Sep-2021	0.92
Estimated Number of COVID-19 Cases per Day, on 23-Sep-2021	662
Change per week	-47
Estimated Percentage Caused by Delta	99.7%
COVID-19 Hospital Occupancy, on 23-Sep-2021	332
Change per week	-40
COVID-19 ICU Occupancy, on 23-Sep-2021	193
Change per week	+2
COVID-19 Deaths per Day, on 20-Sep-2021	6
Change per week	-1
COVID-19 Cases per 1 Million per Day, on 23-Sep-2021	45.0
Among Unvaccinated	147.6
Among Fully Vaccinated	20.8
Reduction Associated with Full Vaccination	-85.9%
COVID-19 Hospital Occupancy per 1 Million, on 23-Sep-2021	22.5
Among Unvaccinated	120.3
Among Fully Vaccinated	4.4
Reduction Associated with Full Vaccination	-96.4%
COVID-19 ICU Occupancy per 1 Million, on 23-Sep-2021	13.1
Among Unvaccinated	80.4
Among Fully Vaccinated	1.3
Reduction Associated with Full Vaccination	-98.3%
<i>COVID-19 Vaccination, on 22-Sep-2021</i>	
Number of People With at Least 1 Dose	11'141'404
Change per week	+94'367
Percent of Population Aged 12+ Vaccinated With at Least 1 Dose	85.5%
Change per week	+0.7%
Number of Fully Vaccinated People	10'378'380
Change per week	+142'237
Percent of Population Aged 12+ Fully Vaccinated	79.6%
Change per week	+1.1%

These data from the Science Table indicate that people who are unvaccinated are seven times more likely to be infected with COVID-19 and 24 times more likely to be in a hospital than those who are fully vaccinated. Among those in the intensive care unit, people who are unvaccinated are 43 times more likely to be a patient compared with those who have been fully vaccinated. It is important to note that, while vaccinated people can transmit

COVID-19, such transmission only happens once they become a case, which is far less likely than among unvaccinated people.

As of Sept 22, 85.5 % of eligible Ontarians have received at least one dose of vaccine, and 79.6 % are fully vaccinated.

On September 9<sup>th</sup>, a new COVID-19 variant was detected in Ontario. The World Health Organization recently added Mu to its list of “variants of interest.” Scientists are raising concerns this new variant could evade the neutralizing antibodies resulting from vaccination and infection.

On Sept 14, the government released [the regulations](#) and [guidance](#) for businesses and organizations to support them in implementing [proof of vaccination requirements](#), which take effect on September 22, 2021. Requiring proof of vaccination will help increase vaccination rates, protect individuals in higher-risk indoor settings, and keep businesses open.

HPPH is reporting 2,136 cases as of Sept 23, 2021. 27 cases are active and 4 cases remain in hospital out of a total of 95. The total number of deaths climbed sharply in September to 65 (including 4 deaths of residents associated with the Knollcrest Lodge Outbreak). There are currently 3 outbreaks, one at Bluewater Rest Home (1 staff, 1 residents), 1 workplace and 1 school (LDSS).

Here is a snapshot of COVID cases and hospital capacity taken from the Ontario Health website on Sept 23 with data as of Sept 22: <https://ohwestcovid19.ca/g15dashboard/>

Snapshot						Page	→	Data As Of:
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	94.1	4.86%	73%	95%		
01 ESC	Lambton HU	5 - Lockdown	45.1	2.18%	71%	80%		
01 ESC	Windsor-Essex HU	5 - Lockdown	64.5	3.81%	76%	87%		
02 SW	Grey Bruce HU	5 - Lockdown	8.8	0.66%	67%	81%		
02 SW	Huron-Perth HU	5 - Lockdown	18.6	1.28%	73%	78%		
02 SW	Middlesex-London HU	5 - Lockdown	32.9	2.04%	74%	87%		
02 SW	Southwestern PH	5 - Lockdown	23.6	1.61%	83%	87%		
03 WW	Waterloo PH	5 - Lockdown	28.2	2.24%	67%	89%		
03 WW	Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph HU	5 - Lockdown	46.8	2.39%	88%	89%		
04 HNHB	Brant HU	5 - Lockdown	52.8	3.31%	65%	101%		
04 HNHB	Haldimand-Norfolk HU	5 - Lockdown	21.9	2.38%	50%	96%		
04 HNHB	Hamilton HU	5 - Lockdown	39.2	2.61%	81%	94%		
04 HNHB	Niagara HU	5 - Lockdown	40.2	3.68%	71%	89%		

As of Sept 19, 2021 (end of day), 196,642 COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered in Huron Perth by HPPH, Primary Care and Pharmacies. A total of 105,495 1<sup>st</sup> and 97,966 2<sup>nd</sup> doses have been delivered to Huron Perth residents with a Coverage of at least one dose in population 12 + years (%):

Population	Aged 12 years +
% with one dose	82.5
% with 2 doses	76.6

The Case and Contact Management, Facilities Response and School teams continue to respond to a steady stream of COVID-10 cases and outbreaks. During wave 4, it is evident that high vaccination rates are mitigating against the large and tragic outbreaks in congregate settings for seniors; however, those populations remain vulnerable and aggressive outbreak measures are still required when outbreaks do occur. During wave 4, we are

experiencing numerous cases associated with school settings; this was anticipated as community rates drive school cases. To date, the public health measures that are in place seem to be preventing widespread transmission in the school setting.

Staff on the Vaccine Preventable Diseases Team are preparing for various scenarios including: COVID-19 vaccine booster doses for some or all of the population, COVID-19 pediatric vaccine approval and program, fall influenza vaccine program, and pediatric catch-up vaccine programs for other vaccines.

The Environment Team is reviewing and updating Section 22 orders, Public Health Instructions under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and Public Health Recommendations in order to support a safe and prudent approach in Huron Perth.

The MOH and the Chair of the Board attended the 2021 *Business Excellence Awards* for Stratford, St Marys and Perth on Sept 16th, as HPPH was nominated in the Not-For-Profit category. Although HPPH did not win, organizers kindly acknowledged HPPH staff for all their hard work over the past 18 months, and their dedicated efforts to keep Huron Perth safe.

The MOH was invited to kick off the next series of Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance Grand Rounds on Sept 17<sup>th</sup>, presenting, *COVID-19 Update/Ask the Expert*. There were many questions received and the feedback was very positive.

The communications team continues to support messaging on vaccine rollout, vaccine confidence and public health measures in our region.

Communication priorities currently include:

- Promoting vaccination opportunities across Huron-Perth, including HPPH clinics and pop-up clinics
- Supporting messaging for staff, operators and patrons around the provincial vaccine certificate requirement
- Continuing to celebrate vaccination milestones, in order to document the vaccination rollout in Huron-Perth as well as support vaccine confidence campaigns.
- Providing communication support as needed to settings affected by an outbreak.

Messaging continues to be distributed through:

- multiple mass communication platforms (online, print, media releases)
- stakeholder communications
- individual replies to phone calls, emails and social media messages from residents

It is anticipated that HPPH will require additional resources into 2022 to manage on-going COVID-19 response needs as well as program recovery efforts.

*Respectfully submitted by Dr Miriam Klassen, MOH & CEO*