

York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee

Understanding communities during the COVID-19 Public Health Response

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Purpose

- The Health Equity Program currently supports York Region's Health Emergency Operations Centre and works closely with the Community and Health Services Department by applying a health equity lens to the COVID-19 response in an effort to reduce the rates, spread and transmission of COVID-19 among vulnerable populations within York Region.
- The purpose of our presentation is to gather YRAAC feedback on the experiences of this pandemic for people living with disabilities.

CURRENT STATE

- Persons with disabilities are disproportionately impacted in the COVID-19 response.
- Parents who had a child or children with disabilities were very or extremely concerned about their children's amount of screen time, loneliness or isolation, general mental health, and school year and academic success.
- Over one-third of participants with long-term conditions or disabilities report experiencing a temporary or permanent job loss or reduced hours during the pandemic

COVID-19 has impacted clients and communities in different ways.

- What has been your experiences as a person living with a disability during this pandemic?
- What do you feel has been most impacted?

Residents being able to identify symptoms and access testing are key activities to reducing the spread of COVID-19 within the community and close contacts.

- As a person with a disability, what has been your experience in accessing and understanding public health messaging (for example, knowing what symptoms to look out for, where to go for testing, physical distancing guidelines)?

There has been a flurry of health messaging related to COVID-19 in an effort to keep residents safe and informed.

- How does information travel within your community?
- As a person with a disability, what are some barriers to how information has been shared?

Increased testing (particularly for individuals displaying symptoms) and containment of COVID-19 are key activities for Public Health during the pandemic response.

- Do you recommend any strategies to better 'reach' people with a disability?

Next steps

- Summarize and share your feedback with the Health Emergency Operations Centre
- There may be an opportunity to participate in follow-up conversations regarding mass immunization and recovery planning at the next meeting.

THANK YOU

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