



Office of the Commissioner
Community and Health Services Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Katherine Chislett, Commissioner of Community and Health Services
Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health

Date: June 7, 2021

Re: Update on Public Health Emergency Response to COVID-19 Global Pandemic

This memorandum provides an update on the current Public Health COVID-19 response brought forward to Council in [May, 2021](#). The emergency response is a corporate wide effort, and Public Health remains grateful to the Corporation and Regional Council for prioritizing the response and the critical supports provided.

COVID-19 CASES IN YORK REGION

As COVID-19 case counts decline, York Region remains vigilant with public health measures and vaccine roll out

As the Region begins to experience a decline in new COVID-19 cases the Public Health COVID-19 response continues with case and contact management, outbreak management, infection control measures and enforcing provincial legislation to slow the spread of COVID-19. First dose vaccinations of eligible residents are steadily increasing, and Regional vaccine plans continue to move forward guided by supply and provincial direction for vaccinating residents with their second dose.

As case counts decrease and vaccination coverage increases, Public Health continues to reinforce the importance for all individuals, even those who have been vaccinated, to continue to follow public health advice and has begun to assess next steps in the COVID-19 emergency response as York Region moves towards increasing stability.

York Region experienced a decline in COVID-19 cases in May 2021

Since reaching a high of 292.6 per 100,000 the week of April 11, 2021 to April 17, 2021 cases have steadily declined throughout May 2021. Over 82% of cases had a variant of concern or mutation of interest identified. Public Health has been actively monitoring the indicators in Table 1 since strengthened public health measures were put in place and has observed some declines in the most recent week ending June 4, 2021.

Table 1 provides York Region's data levels for average number of new COVID-19 cases per day, weekly incidence rate, positivity rate, reproductive number (Rt) and active outbreaks as of June 4, 2021. Attachment 1 shows York Region's threshold levels as of June 4, 2021.

Table 1
York Region Data Levels as of June 4, 2021

Indicators	York Region Status
*Average new COVID-19 cases per day	68.4
*Weekly incidence rate per 100,000 residents	39.9
**Per cent (%) positivity	4.1
***Reproductive number (Rt) Reference Strain	0.75
****Reproductive number (Rt) MOI and VOC	0.83
*****Active outbreaks	55
*****Institutional outbreaks	7
*****Workplace outbreaks	45
*****School outbreaks	1
*****Childcare centre outbreaks	1
*****Day program outbreaks	1

Data notes

- * For the week of May 29 to June 4, 2021
- ** For the week of May 28 to June 3, 2021. % positivity is the proportion of total tests conducted that were tested as positive (the number of positive tests among all tests completed). This helps us to understand the transmission within our community
- *** Rt reference strain, May 11, 2021 based on Estimated date of Infection
- **** Rt for mutation of interest (MOI) and variants of concern (VOC), May 14, 2021 based on Estimated date of Infection for MOI and VOC
- ***** Total active outbreaks as of June 4, 2021

York Region experienced 479 new COVID-19 cases the week of May 29, 2021 to June 4, 2021. York Region's per cent positivity has decreased in the most recent week and is currently at 4.1%. York Region's weekly case incidence is currently below that for City of Toronto, Peel Region and Region of Durham health units. Attachment 2 outlines York Region's weekly COVID-19 case incidence rates and a comparison of rates with neighbouring jurisdictions between September 1, 2020 and June 4, 2021.

Community transmission continues to drive growth of cases in York Region

Community settings continue to be most common acquisition source for the COVID-19 virus in York Region, which includes local transmission within the community where the source of the case acquisition is unknown. Since September 2020, about 47% of York Region cases acquired COVID-19 through close contact with another case. For example, while providing care for a positive case, living with a positive case or having similar prolonged close contact with a positive case when they were ill. Another 36% of cases acquired the infection through local transmission from an unknown community source

York Region continues to experience changing patterns of COVID-19 outbreaks

In recent weeks, the number of institutional outbreaks has declined and then recently plateaued. A consistent decrease in new infections, associated hospitalizations and deaths has been observed in residents. Vaccination in long-term care and retirement homes, and congregate living settings has reduced morbidity and mortality in residents. While it is too early to evaluate the impact of vaccinations on variants of concern in institutional settings, it is known that variants of concern spread more easily and require continued infection prevention and control by those organizations with support from Public Health. In the weeks leading up to June 4, 2021 student and staff COVID-19 cases rapidly declined due to ongoing school closures.

COVID-19 cases in workplaces, and childcare centres have been increasing

Childcare centres saw an increase in the number of outbreaks in late April into May with a decrease recently. Public Health infection prevention and control specialists continue to support childcare centres with proper public health measures including screening practices, cohorting, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting. Higher vaccination coverage is contributing to decreased hospitalizations and other severe outcomes.

Some workplace settings are more prone than others to severe or repeat outbreaks, such as product/materials manufacturing, food manufacturing, service industry and construction. Workplace vaccination has focused on workplaces with a past outbreak located in hotspots to further reduce the likelihood of repeat outbreaks. Fifty-nine workplaces have had repeat outbreaks. Staff have been working closely with these workplaces to improve infection prevention and control. See below for additional data on workplace outbreaks.

There are several factors that may impact the frequency and severity of outbreaks in these settings, for example:

- New variants of concern that can spread more easily than the original COVID-19 strain
- Ongoing community and household transmission of COVID-19 which impacts the probability of the virus entering a setting where outbreaks can occur
- Slower vaccine uptake in staff in institutional settings or various workplaces due to work cultures not promoting or enabling vaccination

- Varying levels of compliance with public health measures, guidance and policies in the community or workplace setting

IMMUNIZATION AND VACCINES

In partnership with local hospitals and community partners, York Region continues to move through the Province's [three-phased Vaccine Distribution Plan](#)

York Region is grateful for the significant contributions made by York Region's COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, hospital partners, physician and partner-led clinics, pharmacies and municipal partners that collaborated to ensure vaccine administration as eligibility continues to expand. York Region currently has [10 York Region Public Health and partner-led mass vaccination clinics](#), including two drive-thru clinics and [pharmacies](#) across the Region.

As of May 25, 2021, York Region expanded vaccine eligibility to any individual age 12 and up living, working or going to school in York Region. As vaccine eligibility has expanded, York Region continues to adjust and update plans, for example:

- Running community pop-up clinics in the Town of Aurora, City of Vaughan and the Town of East Gwilliambury with support of York Region's Vaccine Task Force (who identifies how to serve priority populations outlined within the Province's [three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan](#), develops solutions for distributing and administering vaccine to various populations and settings and provides education and outreach support), the Ministry of Health and the Canadian Red Cross
- Implementing a youth vaccination strategy that has included mental health and wellness activities and support, and dedicated days and time slots for youth and their families to attend a clinic. For example:
 - Opening appointment times following the end of the school day to support families who did not wish to remove children from remote learning during the day
 - Providing youth and families with links and resources to self-care and positive coping strategies to support mental well-being
 - Running a full weekend dedicated to youth and their families at seven York Region clinics on May 29, 2021 and May 30, 2021
 - Hosting pop-up clinics on June 5, 2021 and June 6, 2021, with the support from the Ministry of Health and the Canadian Red Cross vaccine team
 - Increasing appointment times from five minutes to seven to 10 minutes to allow youth and parents to ask questions, address needle fears and considerations related to fear and anxiety (e.g. potential fainting)
 - Collaborating with community partners to identify additional options for youth with disabilities and complex needs (e.g., drive through clinic as in car vaccination)

supports youth with physical and cognitive disabilities since the family car is a familiar space and does not require youth to leave the vehicle), and youth who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Colour

- Continuing Community Paramedic and Public Health Mobile Team vaccinations for individuals in the Region who are homebound, receiving chronic home care, and residents of long-term care, retirement home and community living settings

York Region has reached more than 75% vaccination of adult residents with their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and over 9 % of the adult population has been fully vaccinated

By June 4, 2021, 63.6% of all York Region residents and 75.1% of the adult (aged 18 and over) population of York Region had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine (Table 2). Working collaboratively with York Region partners, 776,318 doses of COVID-19 vaccine were administered in the Region. Among long-term care home and retirement home residents, over 90% of residents have been immunized.

**Table 2
York Region vaccine coverage as of June 4, 2021**

Eligible group	Number vaccinated	Coverage rate (% immunized with one dose)
80 years of age and older	45,711	92.8%
75 to 79 years of age	31,760	89.0%
70 to 74 years of age	46,321	83.9%
65 to 69 years of age	54,367	83.5%
60 to 64 years of age	63,608	79.2%
55 to 59 years of age	71,552	78.2%
50 to 54 years of age	70,598	78.1%
45 to 49 years of age	65,552	77.9%
40 to 44 years of age	58,047	77.7%
35 to 39 years of age	52,153	71.3%
30 to 34 years of age	45,847	61.7%
25 to 29 years of age	46,863	59.5%
20 to 24 years of age	49,972	64.3%
18 to 19 years of age	20,646	62.8%
12 to 17 years of age	41,421	46.2%
Health care workers	51,674	greater than *95%

Eligible group	Number vaccinated	Coverage rate (% immunized with one dose)
York Region residents 18 years of age and older with at least 1 dose	722,997	75.1%
York Region residents 18 years of age and older who are fully vaccinated	88,962	9.2%

Data notes:

- *The health care worker population is based on 2016 Canadian Census counts linked to occupational measures from Occupational Informational Network (O*NET) provided by Public Health Ontario's Occupational Exposure to COVID-19 Risk Tool
- Number vaccinated includes all York Region residents who received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine at any clinic in Ontario
- Data may be incomplete due to the way the reason for immunization field is captured or missing postal code information
- Health care workers who work in York Region, but do not live in York Region are also eligible for vaccination; however, these individuals are not captured in the numbers presented
- Eligible age groups are determined by resident age as of December 31st, 2021 except for those born in 2009 who must be 12 at date of vaccination.
- Coverage uses population estimates from Environics Analytics, Demo Stats 2021 and may differ from other sources.

Federal and Provincial governments continue to implement strategies to increase vaccine distribution and administration across jurisdictions

Changes made to storage requirements for the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer vaccine) have increased storage options and allow for more flexibility in distribution plans as the vaccine may be administered at additional vaccine sites, such as pharmacies. Previously the Pfizer vaccine required a storage temperature between -80°C to -60°C and thawed undiluted vials could be stored in refrigerators for up to five days. On March 3, 2021, Health Canada authorized a change which allowed for storage at -25°C to -15°C for up to two weeks, and on [May 19, 2021](#) Health Canada authorized more flexible storage conditions for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (e.g. at pharmacies). The vaccine may now be stored at the point of use for up to one month (31 days) at refrigerated temperatures 2°C to 8°C.

Between May 17, 2021 and May 21, 2021 COVID-19 vaccine eligibility was expanded to Ontario individuals [18 years of age and older](#) and [youth 12 years of age and older](#) ahead of schedule in the [Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan](#). Additionally, the Province continued to expand vaccine access through a variety of channels including expanded pharmacy access:

- As of the end of May 2021 over 2,400 pharmacies across the province were able to offer the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines
- May 23, 2021, individuals aged 12 and over became eligible to book an appointment to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at pharmacies that offer Pfizer vaccine

- May 21, 2021, an additional 600 pharmacies began offering the Pfizer vaccine to individuals turning 18 in 2021

York Region's immunization plan continues is moving forward as quickly as vaccine supply allows

Vaccine delivery schedules continue to be carefully monitored by staff and appointments are adjusted accordingly. Currently, while York Region has reached 70% vaccination targets set by the Province the Region remains tenth on the list for provincial allotment of vaccine. Although York Region has been receiving a more stable supply of vaccine, allotment received from the ministry does not allow for the Region to operate at full capacity.

Between May 2, 2021 and May 29, 2021 an average of 9,442 doses were administered per day at Public Health or partner-led mass immunization clinics and hospital-based clinics; maximum capacity had sufficient vaccine been available was 13,000 doses per day within these settings. Additionally, remaining clinics, including mobile outreach, occupational, pharmacy, primary care/physician's office, and pop-up clinics, averaged 1,602 doses per day over the same period.

Mobile vaccine clinics at workplaces remove barriers for employers and employees

The targeted workplace strategy is offering mobile clinics to ensure vaccines target high risk workplaces and protect these employees.

As of June 4, 2021, York Region Public Health had a total of 586 confirmed outbreaks among York Region workplaces (43 are active and 543 closed). There were 5,145 positive cases associated with these confirmed outbreaks, with an average of nine cases per outbreak. The majority of these outbreaks (69%) were located in the City of Vaughan and were associated with 78% of confirmed cases. Outbreaks were most common in workplaces related to product/materials manufacturing (35%), service (13%), food manufacturing (9%) construction (9%) and retail (9%).

As of June 4, 2021, York Region has organized and conducted 59 workplace vaccination clinics and administered 8,636 doses. A further three workplace clinics were organized by York Region and supported by the Province of Ontario with mobile vaccine teams run by Red Cross and Medavie Blue Cross, reaching 78 workplaces and administering 1,622 doses. Additionally, 1 workplace clinic was conducted in partnership with Markham Stouffville Hospital, reaching 21 workplaces and administering 1,211 doses.

Workplace locations are prioritized and selected by York Region to ensure vaccines target high risk workplaces and protect these employees. Workplaces were prioritized for on-site vaccination clinics based on their sector, their postal code, their history of outbreaks and the number of employees. Initially clinics were restricted to manufacturing workplaces, but when the Ministry of Health team came on board, staff were able to move to a hub delivery model. In the hub model a larger host workplace hosts a clinic over several days and nearby workplace employees are invited. Similarly, City of Vaughan hot spot postal code areas were prioritized at the beginning and then workplaces in the City of Markham and City of Richmond Hill hot spot

postal codes were included as capacity grew with the addition of the Province of Ontario mobile vaccine teams and Markham Stouffville Hospital team.

York Region continues to work with Provincial and other partners to support and promote vaccines in high priority communities with higher rates of COVID-19

York Region continues to deliver on the provincially-funded [High Priority Communities Strategy](#) in partnership with Ontario Health/Central Local Health Integration Network, community agencies and other service providers, as outlined in the memorandum from [February 2021](#). The strategy is intended to provide enhanced supports to racially diverse, newcomer and low-income communities as they have been impacted more significantly by COVID-19 than others. Key updates on the strategy include:

1. Two lead community health agencies, [Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association](#) and the [Vaughan Community Health Centre](#), continue to lead outreach to residents, conduct case management and help residents to access services and COVID-19 testing. While their work initially focused on identified communities in specific areas of Markham and Vaughan, they have expanded their supports to help with vaccine confidence efforts. It is anticipated that provincial funding will continue to support this work through to September 2021
2. Financial assistance continues to be available to York Region residents who need to take 10 to 14 days off work to self-isolate and are facing financial hardship that poses a direct barrier to COVID-19 testing or completing a required period of isolation. The Region is awaiting further direction from the Province on whether the program will be continued beyond June
3. Since opening in January 2021, the York Region Voluntary Isolation Centre (“the Centre”) has helped nearly 400 people to safely self-isolate. The Canadian Red Cross has been a valuable partner in the operation of the Centre, and in April, York Region also partnered with St. John Ambulance to provide wellness checks and other supports for Centre guests. Additionally, the Centre included Health Care Workers as guests, with in-and-out privileges. Guests of the Centre have expressed gratitude for the assistance and services provided and recognized the value of the Centre in helping prevent the spread of COVID-19. As case counts in the Region decrease, however, usage of the Centre has also been decreasing. In consultation with the Province, the Centre will be closing down at the end of June, however the Region is making arrangements with the Province and neighbouring Isolation Centres to facilitate supports, if needed, after York’s Voluntary Isolation Centre winds down operations

York Region is working with community partners to improve confidence and enhance access to COVID-19 vaccine information and immunization

The Region’s vaccine implementation efforts include:

- **Getting the word out, in inclusive and strategic ways.** This means recognizing the multiple dimensions of diversity within the Region and developing products that are multi-lingual, accessible and culturally sensitive. This includes disseminating timely, easily understandable information through various channels and platforms and flowing information through trusted leaders within communities. York Region has posted vaccine information on its [website](#), which has Google Translate capabilities. The website also includes links to fact sheets in the 11 most common spoken languages in communities included in the High Priority Communities Strategy
- **Removing barriers to access.** By addressing accessibility and mobility issues to getting to clinics and decreasing barriers on-site. For example, Public Health has engaged with the [York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee \(YRAAC\)](#) to inform the planning and delivery of vaccine-related initiatives. Strategies and Partnerships Branch's Inclusion and Accessibility team has also developed guidelines and checklists to ensure that vaccination sites are accessible
- **Having supports available.** Which includes supports with technology access, help with navigating the booking system, extended hours and increased staffing at Access York, and transportation supports. For example, York Region Transit has been providing on-request transit service to residents age 65+ to and from vaccination appointments through [Mobility On-Request \(MOR65+\)](#)
- **Working with and through community.** Including bringing together partners who serve priority community groups to improve confidence in and access to vaccines. Tactics include implementing and supporting Town Halls, communication materials, COVID-19 phone lines and community ambassador networks with culturally specific communications and outreach. Regional staff supported and attended Town Halls held by community partners, including [York Region Alliance of African Canadian Communities](#), [Carefirst](#) and [Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action](#). Public Health staff have also engaged with community partners through the Region's various collaborative tables, including the Community Partnership Council, [COVID-19 Community Coordination \(3C\) Initiative](#) Service Partners forum, and Municipal Diversity and Inclusion Group. These networks help disseminate information and serve as key sources of insights to inform the Region's vaccine rollout

These strategies and considerations informed the community pop-up vaccination clinic the Region held in May at the Markham Masjid, in partnership with [York Region Muslims](#) and [Eastern York Region North Durham Ontario Health Team](#). York Region is currently working towards supporting other identified high priority communities with pop-up or mobile vaccination clinics.

As York Region continues to complete the first dose vaccinations of all eligible individuals, planning is underway for vaccinating everyone with their second dose

While the interval between first and second doses can be up to 16 weeks, second dose appointments at an earlier interval of four weeks or later may be made available based upon

supply of vaccine. Currently second doses of vaccine are available for those with highest risk health conditions, Indigenous individuals and certain high-risk health care workers.

On May 28, 2021 the Province announced the accelerated rollout of [second dose vaccine shots](#), starting with individuals aged 80 and over. Following this, on [June 7, 2021](#), second dose vaccine shots were expanded to individuals turning ages 70 and over in 2021, as well as individuals who received their first dose of an mRNA vaccine on or before April 18, 2021, Additionally, individuals who received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine and are opting to receive either a second dose of AstraZeneca or a mRNA vaccine are also now eligible to schedule their second dose appointment at a participating pharmacy.

Second doses continue to be [administered to eligible individuals](#), as directed by the province and with this new announcement Public Health continues with planning and roll out of second dose vaccinations, which started on [May 31, 2021](#) with York Region residents 80 years of age and older. While the Province outlined an [anticipated schedule](#) for eligibility to book a second dose appointment, schedule will depend on the supply of vaccine.

LONG-TERM CARE HOMES AND RETIREMENT HOMES

As vaccination rates in long-term care and retirement homes increase, Public Health continues collaborating with other public health units to ensure consistent application of revised public health measures

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Public Health has maintained strong partnerships with the 28 long-term care homes and 40 retirement homes in York Region for outbreak preparedness and response. Public Health supports these facilities with outbreak management, knowledge translation and exchange, infection prevention and control guidance and operational interpretation of directives issued during the pandemic. The Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario issued [Directive #3](#) early in the pandemic and it is frequently updated, particularly since the peak of the third wave.

Now, with strong immunization uptake within these facilities by resident's outbreak management guidance and directives from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health are being updated. Public Health is frequently in contact with the facilities providing updates on any new guidance, assisting with operational interpretation, and responding to inquiries with respect to changing local institutional policies based on new guidance documents.

Public Health also responds to complaints from residents and their families to help ensure everyone understands the importance and necessity of maintaining existing public health measures. Public Health is also working closely with our immediate peer health units (i.e., Durham, Peel, Simcoe-Muskoka, and Toronto) to assess and align outbreak management policies and procedures to ensure consistency. This consistent alignment is important given many facilities have ownership that extend across jurisdictions and ensures all organizations are applying the same practices. This collaborative work will continue as new outbreak guidance is released and updated based on emerging evidence for relaxing of public health measures given the high rates of immunization among these populations.

Significant efforts are being made to further increase vaccine coverage within long-term care and retirement homes

Given residents vulnerability of the residents and the fact most outbreaks are caused by staff or caregivers bringing COVID-19 into the facility, Public Health is working to increase vaccination rates in staff and essential visitors. To help increase COVID-19 immunization coverage amongst these groups, a comprehensive resource was developed and shared for increasing vaccine confidence amongst health care workers (this resource has also been adapted for all York Region employers). The focus of this resource is to provide strategies for improving vaccine uptake such as engaging vaccine champions, providing vaccine education opportunities in small group settings, promoting vaccine uptake through pictures and testimonials, communicating often through a variety of settings, languages and media, working toward racial equity and removing barriers to staff getting vaccinated.

To support vaccination rates the Ministry of Long-Term Care is implementing a requirement for COVID-19 immunization policies in long-term care homes

While mandatory vaccination for communicable diseases is not legislated within long-term care and retirement homes like other settings (e.g., schools) on [May 31, 2021](#), the Ministry of Long-Term Care, announced a directive applicable to all long-term care homes as an additional tool to promote high vaccine uptake. Effective July 1, 2021 all long-term care homes must establish, implement, and report on a COVID-19 immunization policy. The policy, at a minimum, requires staff, student placements and volunteers to do one of three things:

- provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19
- provide a documented medical reason for not being vaccinated against COVID-19
- participate in an educational program approved by the home

Under the directive, the homes are also required to track and report on the implementation of the policy and provide statistical information to the Ministry of Long-Term Care.

Public Health continues to work with long-term care and retirement homes on changing testing requirements

On May 21, 2021, the provincial surveillance testing directive for long-term care and retirement homes was updated, and Public Health is working closely with our facilities to implement appropriate testing approaches. This directive sets out the frequency, timing and appropriateness of testing, while also taking into consideration immunization status and past COVID-19 infection. As a result of these changes, Public Health is seeing situations where there are cases reported as positive, many who are asymptomatic, but then after further investigation these are deemed to be false positives. Until true positives are confirmed, Public Health requires all control measures to be implemented to mitigate risk.

In addition, provincial labs are increasing their testing capacity and equipment to support further testing throughput. There have been some instances where these test results have returned inconclusive resulting in the need to collect new specimens and re-test. Public Health expects these issues to be resolved in the very near future once validation of new testing capacity is completed.

EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Public Health is working with Childcare Centres to proactively conduct COVID-19 pandemic preparedness assessments in efforts to curb the upward trend of outbreaks

Since the re-opening of childcare centres in June 2020, Public Health has proactively conducted COVID-19 pandemic preparedness assessments at all 372 York Region childcare centres. These assessments assist York Region childcare operators in ensuring enhanced COVID-19 infection prevention and control and health and safety measures are in place in compliance with the Ministry of Education Operational Guidance for Childcare during a COVID-19 Outbreak.

In response to the increase in outbreaks during late April and into May, in May 2021, a second round of COVID-19 pandemic preparedness assessments were conducted at all York Region childcare centres to support operators.

In addition, a “COVID-19 Childcare Webinar” was provided by Public Health in collaboration with corporate Information Technology Services and Social Services to York Region to childcare and EarlyON operators, and staff. A series of two webinar sessions were provided on May 20, 2021 and 270 people participated. The sessions provided education on topics such as COVID-19 Infections, an overview of COVID-19 outbreaks in York Region Childcare Centers, COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures, process following COVID-19 exposures and COVID-19 outbreak control measures. The webinar is available at [York.ca](https://york.ca).

This month, all childcare and EarlyON centres will be sent an information package with links to York Region COVID-19 fact sheets, COVID-19 posters and signage and a Frequently Asked Questions resource.

Public Health has issued letters of Infection Prevention and Control non-compliance and Section 29.2 *Health Protection and Promotion Act* orders in efforts to control COVID-19 outbreaks in these settings

Public Health supports York Region long-term care, retirement home or group homes experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks, by conducting onsite Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) COVID -19 outbreak assessments, education support and re-assessments in efforts to assist these settings in stabilizing outbreaks.

When ongoing concerns are noted and there is failure to comply with York Region IPAC recommendations, Public Health will escalate inspection efforts by providing a “Letter of IPAC Non-compliance” to the organization’s leadership outlining York Region’s IPAC

recommendations. Further onsite assessments and educational visits are provided to support the home and to ensure compliance with York Region Public Health infection and prevention and control recommendations.

In situations where a home is unable to control the COVID-19 outbreak in their setting and continued IPAC non-compliance is observed, Public Health will escalate enforcement measures whereby the Medical Officer of Health will issue a *Health Protection and Promotion Act* order to the congregate care setting clearly outlining the reason for the order and the actions to be taken to protect the residents they care for and to control the COVID-19 outbreak.

Since January 1, 2021, Public Health has issued 15 letters of IPAC non-compliance (10 letters to long term care and retirement homes and five letters to group homes), and three Section 29.2 *Health Protection and Promotion Act* orders (two to long term care and retirement homes, and one order to a congregate care home) in efforts to control COVID-19 outbreaks in these settings.

York Region continues to enforce COVID-19 related requirements set out under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*

During the period of April 19, 2021 to May 23, 2021, 1,064 inspections and investigations were conducted, and six charges were issued under the *Reopening Ontario Act* for non-compliance. Overall, between March 18, 2020 and June 7, 2021 combined efforts of [enforcing COVID-19 regulations](#) by York Regions COVID-19 enforcement task force members and York Region Transit has resulted in

During the period of April 19, 2021 to May 23, 2021, 1,064 inspections and investigations were conducted by Public Health, and six charges were issued under the *Reopening Ontario Act* for non-compliance. Overall, between March 18, 2020 and June 7, 2021 combined efforts of [enforcing COVID-19 regulations](#) by York Regions COVID-19 enforcement task force members and York Region Transit has resulted in 65,801 inspections, 29,158 education activities and 1,388 charges.

York Region's [Section 22 Class Order](#) under the *Health Promotion and Protection Act* whereby all residents of York Region must cooperate in assisting case and contact management remains an effective tool with challenging COVID -19 positive cases and/or contacts and has been instrumental in gathering required information and gaining compliance. In relation to this order, between April 19, 2021 and May 23, 2021, Public health conducted 74 visits that resulted in 11 charges.

RE-OPENING THE PROVINCE

On May 20, 2021 the Province released a three- step roadmap to reopening the Province

The Region entered the Province-wide shut down on April 3, 2021 and effective April 8, 2021 a provincewide [emergency and stay-at-home order](#) was in place requiring everyone to remain at

home. On [May 13, 2021](#), the Province extended the stay-at-home order until at least June 2, 2021. Following this on May 20, 2021, the Province released a [three-step roadmap to safely reopen the Province](#). Based on trends in key health indicators, including the provincial vaccination rate, the Province announced on June 7, 2021 the Province will move to Step One of the roadmap to reopen on [June 11, 2021](#).

The roadmap to reopen outlines three steps to easing public health measures, that are guided by:

- Step One: 60% of adults vaccinated with one dose and an initial focus on resuming outdoor activities with smaller crowds where the risk of transmission is lower, and permitting retail with restrictions
- Step Two: 70% of adults vaccinated with one dose and 20% vaccinated with two doses, a further expansion of outdoor activities and resuming limited indoor services with small numbers of people where face coverings are worn
- Step Three: 70 to 80% of adults vaccinated with one dose and 25% vaccinated with two doses, expanded access to indoor settings, with restrictions, including where there are larger numbers of people and where face coverings can't always be worn

The province will remain in each step for at least 21 days to evaluate any impacts on public health and health systems. At the end of the 21 days, if vaccination thresholds have been met, along with positive trends in other key public health and health system indicators, the Province will move to the next step.

Public Health's focus and actions remain committed to maintaining a COVID-19 response and making substantial progress through the phases of the Provincial vaccine distribution

As cases and outbreak numbers stabilize Public Health will maintain an enhanced response with case, contact and outbreak management, infection prevention and control measures and enforcing provincial legislation. With the decline in cases and declining need to support immediate queries, some Public Health emergency response functions will move from a seven-day a week operation to five-day week beginning mid-June. For example, dashboards will no longer be updated over the weekends, however will be updated accordingly on Monday's and case contact and outbreak management along with vaccine activities will continue to meet the ongoing needs of the COVID-19 response. This will also be a time for the Health Emergency Operations Centre to assess and plan for next steps for existing emergency operations and when and how to resume or ramp up non-COVID public health services.

As York Region moves into the summer season:

- Public Health will continue to reinforce the importance for all individuals, even those who have been vaccinated, to continue to follow public health advice; stay home as much as

possible, practice physical distancing, wear a mask when required and wash hands frequently

- Ongoing collaboration with partners to support communities with higher rates of COVID-19 and joint efforts with hospital and community partners will continue to ensure York Region's [COVID-19 Vaccination Program](#) is adjusted and rolled out to meet the supply of vaccine will continue
- The Region will continue to respond to and work with communities and partners from various human service sectors to understand and respond to barriers to vaccine uptake, adjustments will ensure continued immunization opportunities for York Region residents

For more information on the memo, please contact Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health, at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74012.



Katherine Chislett
Commissioner of Community and Health Services



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Attachments (2)

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