

Medical Officer of Health: Report to The Board of Health

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Contents

Medical Officer of Health Update	2
Public Health Physician Update – Dr. Carol Zimbalatti	3

Medical Officer of Health Update

COVID-19 Pandemic Update

Since the start of this month, we as a province have had to pivot. As COVID-19 cases continued to rise with almost daily totals above 4,000 new cases, a province-wide Stay-at-Home order went into effect as of 12:01 a.m. on April 8, 2021, to stop the spread. However, case counts continue to rise, with 4,212 new cases reported on April 21. A record number for the province was set on April 16, with 4,812 new cases reported.

Over the past week, the province announced further restriction coming into effect, and that the province-wide Emergency Orders have been extended until May 20, 2021.

As of April 6, variants of concern (VOCs) make up over 65% of all cases across the province now. These VOCs are 50-70% more contagious. The majority of these cases are in Southern Ontario.

The only way we are going to be able to lower the case numbers across the province is by continuing to follow public health measures, and by staying home.

As of April 19, our district had the lowest cumulative rate per 100,000 population in the province. We want to see these numbers remain low. I would like to acknowledge the continued efforts from everyone in the district for our low numbers, but please know, now is not the time to let our guard down.

We need to remember to keep trips outside the home to essential trips only, such as going to work, getting groceries, attending medical appointments, and getting vaccinated.

By following these measures, and getting vaccinated, this will play a key role in getting us back to normal. We each have a role to play.

Vaccination Update

As of April 20, the Health Unit has provided 33,012 vaccinations throughout the district, and of that, 1,655 doses have been administered in participating pharmacies. This is equivalent to 30% of individuals 18 years and older in the district that have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Health Unit is completing the chronic home care patients from Phase 1 of the rollout, and are currently identifying homebound patients not receiving home care services through their primary care provider.

We continue to work through the Phase 2 priorities as defined by the Ministry of Health.

There is an increase in demand for vaccinations as more groups become eligible. We want to reassure the public that everyone who wants a vaccine will get one, however, we also have to follow the Ministry's direction in the rollout of the vaccines.

We are experiencing a higher than usual call volume as the demand for vaccinations increase. We ask for people to try, as much as possible, to book a vaccination appointment online to ensure those individuals who have questions, or are unable to book online, are able to get through to the call centre for support.

Immunity from the vaccine will not happen overnight; public health measurers, such as wearing face-coverings, practicing social distancing, avoiding touching their face, nose, and eyes, and washing their hands frequently will still need to be followed.

Note: Please see Appendix A for a graphic of the most recent rate range of COVID-19 in Ontario, as reported by Public Health Ontario, as of April 27 at 11:30 a.m.

Public Health Physician Update – Dr. Carol Zimbalatti

In the past seven days, the district has had seven new cases, bringing the total case count to 333, with 211 in the Nipissing District and 112 in the District of Parry Sound.

As of April 22, there were 12 active cases, with one case in the hospital. Six of the cases are variants of concern.

In the month of April, to date, there has been 40 cases in the Health Unit district compared to 30 cases for the entire month of March.

In one week, the number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 under the age of 18 has doubled. There were four cases under the age of 18 between April 6 and April 12 compared to eight cases between April 13 and April 19.

There have been three cases in schools, one each in Silver Birches Elementary School, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Elementary School, and White Woods Public School. As of Friday, April 23, all three of those cases will have been deemed resolved, with no transmission observed with any of the cases.

Approved by

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