



Media Release

August 13, 2020

COVID-19 Contact Tracing - More than a Phone Call

Investigations are private, thorough, professional, and efficient

A positive test result for COVID-19 can be a daunting diagnosis for anyone. A positive test result triggers Public Health investigations related to Case Management, Contact Management, and Outbreak Management. Each one of these different types of investigations includes a group of complex protocols. The Infectious Diseases Team at the Grey Bruce Health Unit helps clients with their diagnosis and case management. However, the Public Health investigative effort does not stop there; it continues under a set of robust protocols that ensure appropriate navigation through a series of complex tasks. The activities can include medical, legal, ethical, social, and technical aspects, among others. All of this is done under a formal investigation and with the utmost care and support for the client.

The Infectious Diseases Team at the Grey Bruce Health Unit investigates to follow up with every positive COVID-19 case and many presumptive, indeterminate, and sometimes negative cases. When someone tests positive for COVID-19, the Team automatically receives the result as every lab in Ontario is mandated by law to report the results to the local Medical Officer of Health. The Team follows-up immediately to prevent any further transmission of the virus, providing medical advice and support to the client while also addressing the public's potential risk.

Throughout the investigation, each interaction with a positive case must be professional, friendly, and firm when needed. We are managing a significant transmissible illness and need to convey the gravity of the situation to those that may not understand or share the required level of concern. With our initial and subsequent contacts, we seek to gain trust and understanding from the client. Trust is something that takes time and develops over days and weeks of daily calls. Our approach is to support the client with as much knowledge as possible to ensure a successful recovery and prevention of transmission. We also have to ensure that the information they provide is reliable, and they comply with any requirements for isolation. For example, some clients may have memory disorders that make this task more challenging.

The investigation consists of multiple interviews with cases and contacts. From our interviews with positive clients, we build a list of all close contacts. The interview is structured to help people recall and share all details about movement and contact they

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have had with others – this is called contact tracing. We conduct interviews with these contacts as well. We do daily calls to all active, positive clients and contacts connected to the case. Through this ongoing exchange, we confirm the reliability of information from the client and contacts, and work with them to control the further potential spread of the virus. We have made thousands of calls since March to manage cases and contacts

These investigations have unique challenges. Isolation for those that test positive and their close contact(s) is critical to the success of limiting further spread. In rare cases, when cases and contacts do not follow the isolation orders, we will adopt additional measures to ensure the individuals understand the seriousness of the situation. Follow-up on those who fail to comply with isolation orders may involve sending our staff or collaborating with the police to ensure compliance with an isolation order. This level of follow-up has been needed only in a small number of cases. Most people understand the situation and fully comply, recognizing that we are there to support them and their contacts.

Other challenges include equity and access. As some clients may not have access to a phone, we provide cell phones to positive cases and their contacts during the isolation period. Utilizing language interpretation through Public Health Ontario has helped address challenges related to language barriers in some cases. Both of these strategies proved successful when working with a group of migrant farmworker cases and case contacts. Another challenge is the sheer number of required calls and interviews within the narrow window of time. The provincial target for health units is to follow-up with 90% of cases within 24 hours. With the 126 cases we have since March, thousands of calls and interviews have been completed. To date, we have been able to maintain the track record of follow-up within 24 hours in 100% of cases.

Living in small rural settings makes privacy that much more critical. We treat all cases and contacts with the utmost confidentiality. Names are never shared, and exact locations of positive cases are not made public to protect the client's identity. The Team does a thorough investigation and manage all contacts, independent of each other. Clients that test positive have no requirement to tell anyone of their diagnosis. When we call contacts, we only disclose that "you have been exposed to a COVID-19 case", we do not name the case. Unless individuals choose to disclose their status (case vs contact) to others, no one else will know their status. Although we operate in the public arena, we are legally bound to maintain strict privacy.

In addition to supporting individuals and preventing transmissions of the virus in the community, the investigations also support workplaces and prevent transmission and outbreaks in these occupational settings. Examples of these workplaces or organizations include big-box retail outlets, restaurants, factory settings, farms, clinics, and hospitals, etc. While the Ministry of Labour remains responsible for workplace safety and occupational illnesses, Public Health manages infectious disease cases and outbreaks in these facilities. During the investigation of every case, we evaluate the risk of transmission in the case's workplace. We manage cases and contacts related to these occupational settings. With all local cases so far, we have successfully ensured that no transmission of COVID-19 has occurred to co-workers or customers.

Depending on the complexity of the investigation, we sometimes call on the collaboration of the employer. At times, employers in their efforts to go above and beyond, act without Public Health direction. Although sometimes beneficial, actions that fall outside of those supported by Public Health can sometimes cause undue fear and stress in the population. We urge collaboration in these situations to ensure a consistent and united approach while containing the virus.

Notably, the Infectious Disease Team's efforts are mirrored by parallel efforts related to communication to partner organizations, agencies, and the public.

Investigations related to case management, contact management, and outbreak management are complex and challenging undertakings that require a competent team of professionals. If implemented appropriately, as they have been in Grey and Bruce Counties during the COVID-19, they break the transmission chain and provide the benefit of safety to individuals, families, and our communities. They allow us to keep healthy people healthy.

Please see our newly released video highlighting "[What is Contact Tracing](#)"

For More Information:

Dr. Ian Arra

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

To arrange to speak with Dr. Arra, please contact Drew Ferguson at:

519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 ext. 1269 or d.ferguson@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca



Media Release

August 13, 2020

Medical Officer of Health Renews Order – Face Coverings in Indoor Public Places in Grey Bruce

The Grey Bruce Health Unit Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Ian Arra, is renewing the Order issued July 17, 2020, ordering all Commercial Establishments in Grey Bruce, to the fullest extent possible for all the following, that they:

- ensure effective measures are in place to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres amongst all employees and clients;
- ensure the availability of alcohol-based hand rub at all entrances and exits; and,
- make the best effort (verbal) to restrict persons from entering the premises or remaining within the premises if not wearing a face covering. Turning away or refusing a customer is not required under this Order.

This Order comes into effect on Friday, 14th day of August, 2020, at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time and shall remain in effect for 4 weeks (being 28 calendar days) from that time. This Order may be rescinded, amended or extended by further Order.

This Order is made pursuant to Section. 22 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H. 7 as amended.

The revised Order includes provision for those requiring lip reading by allowing removal of face covering to accommodate communication with a deaf person.

“The renewed Order will continue to help all of us maintain the safe and successful re-opening.” says Grey Bruce Top Doctor, Dr. Ian Arra. “The community has embraced this measure as a part of their personal routine along with physical distancing and other

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public health recommendations. There is a great need to continue to do everything possible to prevent the spread of COVID-19.”

There is no need for a medical note for not wearing a face covering. Please be aware there is no such thing as a COVID-19 Face Mask Medical Exemption Card or anything similar.

There is increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 as the Provincial Stage 3 re-opening plan includes permitted activities with high contact intensity and that would require significant modifications to maintain public health safety. Additionally, re-opening of commercial establishments increases the frequency of contact and limit opportunities for physical distancing. The risk of cases and outbreaks of COVID-19 in Grey and Bruce Counties increase without adequate preventative measures as identified in the renewed Order.

Attachment: [CLASS ORDER of the Medical Officer of Health for the Grey Bruce Health Unit](#)

For More Information:

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

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Media Release

August 17, 2020

Medical Officer of Health Open Letter to Parents and Guardians of School-Aged Children

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As the Medical Officer of Health for Grey Bruce, I want to thank you for the great efforts you have invested in keeping your family and our community safe over the past few months.

I want to support you and your family as you consider the decision to send your child or children back to school in September. Our children need to interact with their friends, learn collectively, and return to a predictable and stable learning environment. Returning to school is vital for their education and is indispensable for their overall wellbeing. This year we are thinking not just about school supplies and arranging back to school care for our youngsters but also about their health and safety.

We have a relatively exceptional situation in Grey and Bruce. We achieved high level of prevention of transmission and optimal control over the outbreak in April, and we have continued to maintain this control during the reopening stages. This control is directly related to the collective effort from all of us. By "us," I mean the community-at-large, public health, local municipal leaders, local provincial and federal leaders, the provincial government, professional journalism, first responders, non-government organizations and many other stakeholders. This relatively positive situation will allow us to provide our children with the safe school reopening they deserve.

As our community reopens, I have no doubt we will see more cases of COVID-19. With a pandemic, the spread of the virus will not stop until a herd immunity (70% of the population immune) is reached, preferably through a vaccine. Until then, the goal is to implement strategies to ensure a balanced approach of mitigating the risk of virus transmission and providing our kids with the appropriate level of social and educational experience, and well-being. We want parents to have all the information they need to feel confident in their decision on whether to send their kids back to school, and reassured that children and teachers are safe in their classrooms. The decision to send your child or children back to school is personal and might be different for every family.

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For weeks, the Grey Bruce Public Health Unit has been in close communication with school officials from all schools in Grey and Bruce to support their planning proactively. Working tirelessly, your Health Unit's team and I are committed to creating a safe and caring learning environment. We will continue to work together to best position our schools for safe and successful reopening. I can reassure you that contact tracing (contact management) is being conducted robustly daily in Grey and Bruce's communities. For more on contact tracing, see our video [What is Contact Tracing](#). These measures, along with active and passive surveillance and outbreak management, will be immediately deployed in all schools in Grey and Bruce when needed to break the transmission chain.

School reopening is directed provincially by the Ministry of Education through guidance documents and regulations. As they tend to be during emergencies, the guidance and regulations are most likely to be renewed and changed in the coming weeks as consultations from stakeholders occur and as the dynamics of the outbreak evolve. Your Health Unit and your Medical Officer of Health, will keep you posted with new information and recommendations as the situation develops. We will do this through different media, whether be it indirectly through communication through schools or directly through multiple town halls with parents, media releases, among others.

As families consider making decisions about sending their kids to school, it is essential to remember that we have a relatively favourable situation in Grey and Bruce. Most children infected with COVID get a very mild illness and recover without much help. Some medical conditions, such as lung diseases, autoimmune disorders, cancer or diabetes, among others, can make them prone to severe illness and complications if they get COVID-19. As your Medical Officer of Health, I encourage you to talk to your child's health care provider about conditions that might put your child at risk. Remember, in making this decision that for most kids, the benefits of being in school outweigh the risks.

Furthermore, although sending your child to school may increase the risk of getting COVID-19, keeping your child at home does not reduce the risk to zero. There will always be potential transmission within the family bubble. Additionally, keeping a child at home may impact their social, mental and developmental wellbeing. There is no one right decision for all kids and families - only what is right for your child and your family.

Regarding your family, while your child returns to school: Again, most people will recover without help if they get COVID-19. The people at risk for severe outcomes are those over 70 or have chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease or cancer, among others. These people (including you) may need extra protection if you are living together in the same household. Should there be a medically fragile person in your home, you will need to consider the risk to that person against the important benefits of sending your child to school. There is no perfect answer - make a

decision that feels right to you at the time, as there will be an opportunity to adjust and adapt as the local circumstances around COVID-19 changes. Work with your family to create a family isolation plan to keep symptomatic family members away from the vulnerable person(s). This intentional step to reduce the exposure of vulnerable people in your household to other social networks will lower the risk of disease transmission.

As we move forward, the partnership between Grey Bruce Public Health and your local school community will be secure, and we continue to work together to help your children learn safely.

Dr. Ian Arra MD MSc FRCPC ACPM ABPM
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

For More Information:

Dr. Ian Arra
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer
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From: [Dr. Arra, Ian \(MOH\)](#)
To: [Dr. Arra, Ian \(MOH\)](#)
Cc: [Dawn Ferguson](#); [Elin Moneray](#)
Subject: Grey Bruce Public Health COVID-19 Resources and Information: August 17, 2020
Date: August-17-20 2:58:34 PM



As part of our on-going efforts to keep you up-to-date on COVID-19 related information, we are providing resources and links that may be useful for you and your organization.

Please be advised you are receiving this email notification based on previous electronic communications with the Grey Bruce Health Unit and/or our community partners. If you **do not wish to receive** these communication updates from Grey Bruce Public Health, please email: a.gaviller@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

August, 17, 2020

Here are links to some COVID-19 resources/information you may find useful. Many of these items are available on the [GBHU website](#) and may be shared publicly. If you have any questions, please call the Help Line At: 519-376-9420 ext 3000

Please note: the COVID-19 section of the Grey Bruce Public Health website has been recently updated. It includes general [COVID-19 information, inquiries, and resources](#), [information for health care providers](#), [information on the recovery phase](#), and [a message from Dr. Arra Medical Officer of Health](#). Please see [this resource](#) for workplaces to develop safety plans. It is a valuable resource to help your organization ensure all safety practices are in place, in relation to COVID-19.

1. [MoH Mandatory Face Covering Order](#)
2. [Media Release: Medical Officer of Health Renews Face Covering Order](#)
3. [Media Release: COVID-19 Contact Tracing - More than a Phone Call](#)
4. [Contact Tracing Video](#)
5. [FAQ for Wearing Masks and Face Coverings \(updated\)](#)
6. [Sector Reopening Sports and Recreation \(updated\)](#)
7. [COVID-19 - Local Long-Term Care Facilities Updates – News Release](#)
8. [Considerations for Shelters \(updated\)](#)
9. OPHA COVID-19 Summary of Key Developments for July 30 – August 14th 2020 (*below Social Media links*)

Public Health is pleased to provide places of business with the option of posting the sample signs that are linked below. Please note, posting of these signs are not mandatory and are simply being provided as a tool if the businesses choose to use them. We stress the importance of ensuring that kindness and acceptance is practiced while respecting individual exemptions to this order.

[Be Kind Poster](#)
[We Can Prevent the Spread of COVID Poster 1](#)
[We Can Prevent the Spread of COVID Poster 2](#)
[Attention Poster - Order for Commercial Establishments](#)
[Masks Required Poster](#)
[Screening Poster](#)

If you have any questions, please call the Help Line At: 519-376-9420 ext 3000

Follow the Grey Bruce Health Unit on Social Media:



[Facebook](#): Grey Bruce Health Unit



[Twitter](#): GBPublicHealth



[Instagram](#): gbpublichealth



[YouTube](#): GreyBruceHealthUnit

OPHA COVID-19 Key Developments August 10 – 14

Provincial Developments:

Ontario Releases 2020-21 First Quarter Finances:

- The Ontario Government's COVID-19 response action plan is now projected to be \$30 billion, up from \$17 billion announced last March;
- A provincial deficit of \$38.5 billion in 2020-21 is projected with lower revenues and higher program expenses that anticipated and a forecasted decline of Ontario's real GDP by 6.6 per cent in 2020.
- Facing criticism for not fulfilling his campaign pledge to reduce the deficit, Premier Ford noted this week that "our plans to pursue a balanced budget have been blown out of the water."

Safe Restart Agreement Funding for Municipalities:

- Ontario is providing municipalities with up to \$1.6 Billion in emergency funding to deliver critical public services, such as public transit and shelters. \$695 million will help municipalities address operating pressures related to the COVID-19 pandemic; \$660 million will support transit systems; and an additional \$212 million, through the Social Services Relief Fund, will help vulnerable people find shelter.

School Reopenings:

Education Minister Lecce announced some additional measures and investments to support schools reopening in September including:

- permitting school boards, in consultation with their local public health unit to lease space to create smaller class sizes;
 - allowing boards to access up to 2 percent of their operating budget from their prior year accumulated surplus to meet their local needs and priorities;
 - providing an additional \$11 million to support equitable school reopening plans for those boards that do not have sufficient reserves; and
 - providing \$50 million in one-time funding to support improved ventilation, air quality and HVAC systems.

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health's Perspectives:

- Dr. Williams, said public health officials are coordinating with the Ministry of Education to put in place as many public health measures as possible to ensure the overall safety and the limitation of any spread. This includes making masks mandatory for students in grade four and up, asking teachers and students to pre-screen before school and a plan to hire 500 public health nurses into our school system to assist with surveillance.
- Premier Ford indicated that "We're already in mid-August and that process is still in the "call-out" stage... we want to make sure we fulfil the 500 positions without draining from the system" and "get them in the classrooms as soon as possible."
- Asked as to what advice he has for parents of immunocompromised children, Dr. Williams advised such parents to take a serious risk assessment before deciding on plans to return their kids to school in the fall.

Farm Outbreaks Among Agri-farm workers:

- An Emergency Medical Assistance Team is on the ground in Windsor-Essex; public health officials are monitoring the situation and working closely with Ontario Health on voluntary testing and liaising with other ministries (e.g. Labour, Agriculture)
- Dr. Williams indicated that there will be stringent controls on any new migrant workers to prevent infecting the rest of the workforce and spreading the virus in the community.

Reopening of More Recreational Centres and Support for Amateur Sport:

- Beginning August 15th, sport, fitness and recreation facilities will be able to have up to 50 patrons for each indoor sport or fitness room, while ensuring physical distancing of at least two metres.
- The Ontario Government is investing \$8 million through the Ontario Amateur Sport Fund to help the province's sports organizations deliver programming and competitions to develop athletes, coaches and officials, and to promote health and wellness in communities across the province.

Ontario Launches Climate Change Impact Assessment:

- The Ontario Government selected the Climate Risk Institute to undertake a provincial climate change impact assessment to evaluate climate change impacts on infrastructure, food and agriculture, people and communities, natural resources, ecosystems and the environment, and business and the economy.

Federal Developments:

Latest COVID-19 Modelling Data:

Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Tam, shared the latest modelling data on the pandemic. Here are the key takeaways:

- COVID hotspots remain in the southern parts of Ontario, Quebec and Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan;
- young adults, aged 20 to 39 years, are showing the highest incidence rates;
- outbreaks continue in high risk settings involving closed spaces, crowded places and close contact situations;
- the federal government is planning for a "realistic worse-case scenario" with a large peak in the fall followed by ongoing peaks and valleys;
- while the number of deaths and severe illnesses reported daily remains low, the number of new cases has increased.

Dr. Theresa Tam said, "Now that COVID-19 activity has been brought under manageable control ... we must establish a careful balance to keep the infection rate low while minimizing unintended health and social consequences."

Vaccines:

- When asked to respond to recent reports of a new Russian approved COVID-19 vaccine, Dr. Tam and Dr. Njoo noted that International Health regulators would flag concerns, if any were to arise, in the review process of the quickly developed Russian vaccine.

Additional Investment in Indigenous Communities:

- Indigenous Services Minister Miller announced an additional \$305 million to support Indigenous leadership, governments and organizations to develop community-based solutions that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The funding can be used to support Elders and vulnerable community members, address food insecurity, educational and other supports for children, mental health assistance and emergency response services, preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and more.

Surplus Food Rescue Program:

- Agriculture Minister Bibeau announced a \$50M Surplus Food Rescue Program to direct the high volume of surplus and perishable food to those in need. The federal government will be partnering with Second Harvest, Food Banks Canada and more than 100 food businesses and non-profit organizations.

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) COVID-19 Guidance for Schools :

- The PHAC recently released recommended guidelines to support school administrators and local public health authorities; recommended measures included students over the age of 10 wearing masks, students and teachers staying two metres apart and being grouped together to reduce the number of people they come into close contact with.
- On the question of smaller-class sizes, Dr. Tam said recommendations would depend on local contexts in terms of provincial policies and local public health measures.

Summary of Trends in Ontario and Cases in Canada

Cases in Ontario:

- Total number of cases: 40,459; an increase of 562 cases since last Thursday
- Resolved: 36,772 (90.9%); 748 new cases resolved
- Deaths: sadly, 2,788 people have died; an increase of 5
- Hospitalized: 41 people were hospitalized; 17 were in intensive care and of those, 9 were on a ventilator
- Long-term care homes (according to IPHIS): 22 active outbreaks; 11 confirmed cases in residents; 43 confirmed cases in staff; 1,846 deaths among residents and 8 among staff
- Lab testing: 2,528,403 completed; 30,137 tests reported Friday; 35,426 under investigation

Cases in Canada:

- Total number of cases: 121,234; an increase of 2,673 since last Thursday.
- Resolved: 107,553 (88.7%); an increase of 4,447
- Deaths: 9,015 (7.4%); an increase of 49
- People tested per million: 123,309
- Percent Positivity: 2.5%

OPHA COVID-19 Key Developments August 3 – 7

Provincial Developments

Plans for School Re-openings:

- Further to the Premier's announcement last week of plans for reopening schools this fall, various parent groups, unions, child health experts and others raised questions, concerns and criticism about the safety of these plans, especially about maintaining class sizes. Dr. Yaffe echoed Premier Ford's comments by describing the province's back-to-school measures as "quite reasonable" and "stronger than most other provinces."
- Dr. Yaffe cited a report released by SickKids last week that said keeping students one metre apart was sufficient, whereas the province is hoping to keep students two metres apart with desks being moved "as far apart as possible" to ensure physical distancing. Dr. Yaffe said the most important thing for children right now is to get [kids] back into school."
- Dr. Williams noted that all the science he has access to suggests that the risk of infection for elementary-age children is "very small."

Federal Developments

Securing Vaccines to Treat and Prevent COVID-19:

Innovation, Science and Industry Minister Bains and Public Services and Procurement Minister Anand announced several measures being taken by the Government of Canada, based on the recommendations of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, to secure a future supply of COVID-19 vaccine and therapies. Details included:

- investing \$56 million to support clinical trials for a COVID-related vaccine candidate from Variation Biotechnologies Inc. (VBI);
- finalizing two agreements with Pfizer and Moderna to secure millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccine candidates. (Pfizer will supply its BNT162 mRNA-based vaccine candidate, while Moderna will provide its mRNA-1273 vaccine candidate);
- negotiating with other potential vaccine suppliers; and
- requiring all potential vaccines to have Health Canada regulatory approval.

The Role of Vaccines in Preventing COVID-19:

When asked by the media about the search for a vaccine, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Tam noted that:

- it's unclear how effective a vaccine will be; questions remain about the degree and duration of immunity a vaccine will provide, the dosage that will be needed and whether it will prevent people from getting infected altogether or simply prevent severe illness requiring hospitalization.
- "[A vaccine] is one important layer of protection....it is a very important solution if we get a safe and effective vaccine, but I would say that the public health measures that we have in place - the sort of personal, daily measures that we take - is going to have to continue."

School Re-Openings:

- In response to questions about plans for reopening schools in September, Dr. Tam said that she will be publishing detailed guidelines. She indicated they will include a recommendation that children over the age of 10 be required to wear masks and that extra consideration should be given for children under the age of 10. She noted "these recommendations may have to adapt and undergo evolution as the evidence changes as we come to understand transmission in different age groups and what happens in schools."
- She noted that it is important to have multiple health and safety measures in place (e.g. non-medical masks and alternatives to in person learning) to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread as physical distancing may not always be possible in school settings.

COVID- 19 App:

- With the release of the ast of the new federally funded COVID Alert app, Dr. Tam addressed some of the criticisms (e.g. those who are able to use it may be limited due to income and the type of technology people have access). Dr. Tam emphasized that the app is one of many tools available to fight the pandemic, and that people should use these tools even if they aren't perfect. She stressed that "despite these gaps, we need to have a go at using it," and "as many people who can download it and use it as possible will make the app more successful."

[Infrastructure Program Expands to Support COVID-19 Community Resilience:](#)

Infrastructure and Communities Minister McKenna announced a new \$3.3B COVID-19 Resilience funding stream for infrastructure projects to help provinces and territories deal with the pressures brought on by the COVID-19 health and economic crisis. Details include:

- increasing the federal share with provinces for public infrastructure projects to 80 per, and funding 100 per cent of the cost of projects in the territories and with Indigenous recipients.
- expanding the eligibility criteria in the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program's other existing streams for projects that can start in the near-term; and
- using federal funding to support pandemic-resilient infrastructure projects including, retrofitting schools, upgrading hospitals and long-term care homes, building new parks, cycling and walking paths and disaster mitigation projects that support sustainable, economically healthy, low-carbon, and inclusive communities.

Summary of Trends in Ontario and Cases in Canada (from July 30 to August 6)

[Cases in Ontario:](#)

- Total number of cases: 39,897 cases; an increase of 688 cases since last Friday
- Resolved: 36,024 (89.5%); 950 new cases resolved (+.8)
- Deaths: sadly, 2,783 people have died; an increase of 8 in the last week
- Hospitalized: 66 people were hospitalized; 28 were in intensive care and of those, 12 were on a ventilator
- Long-term care homes (according to iPHIS): 22 active outbreaks; 11 confirmed cases in residents; 43 confirmed cases in staff; 1,846 deaths among residents and 8 among staff
- Lab testing: 2,346,433 completed; 25,136 tests Friday; 25,077 under investigation

[Cases in Canada:](#)

- Total number of cases: 118,561; an increase of 2,762 over the past week
- Resolved: 103,106 (87%); an increase of 2,244
- Deaths: 8,966 (7.6%); an increase of 37
- People tested per million: 114,904
- Percent Positivity: 2.6%

Details and Links to Provincial Announcements:

Outlined below are some other announcements of note from the provincial government that impact health or the determinants of health:

[Safe Reopening of Child Care:](#)

\$234.5M in funding from The Ontario government, in partnership with the federal government, to support child care operators, EarlyON Child and Family Centres, and First Nations Child and Family Programs increase cleaning and infection control, ensure staff have access to personal protective equipment, promote physical distancing, purchase additional cleaning supplies, and support staffing needs.

Combating Crime and Building Safer Communities:

- \$6M in funding over the next three years through The Proceeds of Crime Front-Line Policing Grant to 16 police services across the province to implement 21 crime prevention and community safety initiatives to fight gun and gang violence, human trafficking, and sexual violence and harassment.

Support for the Non-Profit Sector:

- \$83 million is being redirected by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to its Resilient Communities Fund to provide grants of up to \$150,000 to help eligible non-profit organizations recover from COVID-19 and continue the delivery of community programming (e.g. to support training, strategic planning and implementation, wellbeing supports); fundraising plans, social finance, new health and safety processes, new approaches for organizations to work together;

Preferred Route for New 400-series Highway and Transitway Across the GTA

- the confirmation of the preferred route for a new 400-series highway and transit corridor across York, Peel and Halton regions, the GTA West corridor, to reduce travel times for drivers and support economic growth and job creation; the environmental assessment is expected to be complete by the end of 2022.

Province Supporting Innovative Made-in-Ontario Technology to Sanitize PPE:

- \$2M to Clean Works Medical and Pure Life Machinery to help manufacture a one-of-a-kind, sanitizing device called the Clean Flow Healthcare Mini which can decontaminate up to 800 N95 masks per hour along with other personal protective equipment.

OPHA COVID-19 Key Developments July 31

Federal Developments

Extension of Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECR) Program:

- Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the federal emergency commercial rent assistance program is being extended by one month to help eligible small businesses pay rent for August.

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB):

Confirming the CERB will soon be coming to an end, the Prime Minister said the government's goal is to transition everyone on the CERB onto employment insurance (EI). He indicated that the federal government will create a transitional parallel benefit similar to CERB, but with EI components for those who don't qualify. This benefit would include:

- access to training;
- sickness and caregiver benefits for Canadians not covered at work if they get COVID-19 or if their kids and parents do and they have to take care of them; and
- the opportunity to work more hours to earn more money.

Asked by the media why the government doesn't just continue the CERB for those workers who don't qualify for EI, Employment Minister Qualtrough said the CERB has served its purpose and its discontinuation indicates that Canada is no longer in an emergency but a recovery phase. The Minister indicated more details would be provided ahead of this transition planned for September.

Additional Support for Temporary Foreign Workers and their Employers:

Prime Minister Trudeau announced over \$58 million to support temporary foreign workers and their employers to avoid and limit the consequences of COVID-19 outbreaks in farms. Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Bibeau provided the following details:

- \$7.4 million will be earmarked for migrant worker support organizations to increase outreach in their own languages and improve workers' understanding of how to protect themselves from COVID-19 and their rights in the workplace, services available to them as well as information on how to access health, income and emergency support when needed;
- Through a \$16.2 million investment, the government is immediately expanding the scope and number of inspections, with a focus on employers who hire workers who are at higher-risk and vulnerable to contracting COVID-19; and
- Some \$35 million to share with producers the costs of additional on-farm measures, including living quarters that will improve the health and safety of all workers and limit the spread of COVID-19.

Reports of Unsolicited Seed Mail Deliveries:

- Asked by the media about recent reports of 'unsolicited seeds' delivered by mail to some Canadians, Minister Bibeau said the reports are concerning and indicated the government is not able to provide more information. She instructed Canadians if they receive unsolicited seeds by mail to not open them or plant them and to contact Canada's Food Inspection (CFI) agency.

COVID Alert App Available for Download in Ontario:

Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Ford announced this past Friday that COVID Alert, a new national mobile app, is now available to Ontarians for free download. The app helps notify users if they may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Here are the key takeaways:

- use of COVID Alert app is voluntary and serves as another tool to help limit the spread of COVID-19;
- once fully functioning in their province or territory, users who test positive for COVID-19 will receive a one-time key from their health authority that they can enter into the app; when the key is entered, COVID Alert will notify other users who may have come in close contact with that person for at least 15 minutes in the past 14 days, so they can contact their local public health authority for guidance;
- to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of all Canadians, the app uses strong measures to protect any data it collects, and does not track a user's location or collect personally identifiable information; and
- the Government of Canada has also been working with the other provinces and territories to bring their jurisdictions on board in the coming weeks and months.

Provincial Developments

Ontario Implementing Additional Measures at Bars and Restaurants to Help Limit the Spread of COVID-19:

The Ontario Government, in consultation with the Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, has amended orders O. Reg 364/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 3 and O. Reg. 263/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 2, under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, to implement additional measures for restaurants, bars, and other food or drink establishments. To keep patrons of restaurants, bars, and other food or drink establishments safe, the amended orders will implement the following measures:

- all patrons will be required to be seated at all times, in both indoor and outdoor areas, with limited exceptions;

- bars and restaurants (and also tour boat operators) will be required to keep client logs for a period of 30 days and to disclose the client logs to the medical officer of health or an inspector on request to support case and contact tracing; and
- complementary changes are being made for tour and tour boat operators.

Long-Term Care Facilities:

- Asked by the media if the government would commit to increase funding to hire more health care and support workers in long-term care facilities in full-time positions with benefits, Premier Ford said the province is going to move on it following a technical briefing on the matter.

Dr. Barbra Yaffe's Comments on School Re-openings:

- Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Yaffe underscored that the Ministries of Health and Education have worked "very closely" on potential outbreak scenarios, stressing "quick, reliable" access to testing for the novel coronavirus will be one of the most important elements in rolling out the province's back-to-school plans safely.
- Dr. Yaffe reviewed several scenarios yesterday on what would happen if a student or staff member developed symptoms in school. This included having teachers and staff trained on how to isolate infected children quickly, have the child tested if there's consent, notify their caregivers and direct the student's classmates to get tested as well as other close contacts and stay home.

Other Announcements:

A number of other announcements were released yesterday, including:

- [**Ontario Safely and Gradually Reopens DriveTest Centres**](#): People will be able to access more drive testing services as the Ontario government moves DriveTest centres into the second phase of its reopening plan.
- [**Ontario Launching Review of York Children's Aid Society**](#): The operational review will investigate allegations of racism, bullying and harassment involving senior management at the York Region Children's Aid Society.
- [**Ontario Taking Steps to Protect Fish and Wildlife Habitat**](#): The province is taking steps to protect fish stocks and natural habitat from the harmful impacts of double-crested cormorants by introducing a fall harvest for the species to address concerns about its impacts to local ecosystems.
- [**Canada and Ontario Invest in Affordable Housing in Kingston**](#): The governments of Ontario and Canada are investing over \$625,000 in a new affordable housing development in Kingston to help provide individuals and families who are at risk of homelessness the housing and support services they deserve.
- [**Ontario Encourages All Residents to Take the Ontario Parks 30x30 Challenge**](#): During August, Ontarians can participate in the 30x30 Challenge by spending 30 minutes outside in nature each day for 30 days.

Summary of Trends in Ontario and Cases in Canada as of Friday, July 31st

Trends in Ontario Cases:

- The province reported 134 new cases after two straight days of fewer than 100.
- Ottawa once again led the province in new infections with 26 new cases. Windsor-Essex had 24 new cases, while Peel reported 20. There were 19 new cases in Toronto. Meanwhile, Southwestern Public Health, which serves the counties of Oxford and Elgin and the City of St. Thomas, reported 19 additional cases.
- 28 of the province's 34 public health units reported five or fewer new cases.

Cases in Ontario:

- Total number of cases: 39,209 cases; an increase of 134 cases
- Resolved: 35,074 (89.5%); 168 new cases resolved
- Deaths: sadly, 2,775 people have died
- Hospitalized: 78 people were hospitalized; 29 were in intensive care and of those, 15 were on a ventilator
- Long-term care homes (according to iPHIS): 17 active outbreaks; 9 confirmed cases in residents; 37 confirmed cases in staff; 1,845 deaths among residents and 8 among staff
- Lab testing: 2,171,972 completed; 30,033 tests Friday; 28,267 under investigation

Cases in Canada:

- Total number of cases: 115,799; an increase of 393
- Resolved: 100,862 (87.1%)
- Deaths: 8,929 (7.7%)
- People tested per million: 106,324
- Percent Positivity: 2.7%

OPHA COVID-19 Key Developments July 30

Provincial Developments

Ontario Releases Plan for Safe Reopening of Schools in September:

Details on the safe restart of the 2020-2021 school year were provided today by Premier Ford, Health Minister Elliott, Education Minister Lecce and Ontario's Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Yaffe.

- Elementary schools (Kindergarten to Grade 8) will reopen provincewide, with in-class instruction five days a week.
- Secondary schools with lower risk will reopen with a normal daily schedule, five days a week; most secondary schools will start the school year in an adapted model of part-time attendance with class cohorts of up to 15 students alternating between attending in-person and online. (See list of schools effected below).
- Students from Grade 4-12 and school staff will be required to wear masks.
- Parents will continue to have the option to enroll their children in remote delivery, which respects their fundamental role in making the final determination of whether they feel safe with their children returning to school.

To support the implementation of additional public health protocols to keep students and staff safe, the provincial government is providing over \$300 million in targeted, investments, including:

- \$60 million for procurement of medical and cloth masks for students and staff, with direction to boards to ensure that students who cannot afford a mask are provided one;
- \$30 million for teacher staffing to support supervision, keeping classes small and other safety related measures;
- \$50 million to hire up to 500 additional school-focused nurses in public health units to provide rapid-response support to schools and boards in facilitating public health and preventative measures, including screening, testing, tracing and mitigation strategies;
- Over \$23 million to provide testing capacity to help keep schools safe;
- \$75 million in funding to hire over 900 additional custodians and purchase cleaning supplies for schools;
- \$40 million to clean school buses, to ensure that students are in a thoroughly cleaned transportation environment;
- \$10 million for health and safety training for occasional teachers, who have historically not been covered by professional development that is offered to permanent teachers;
- \$10 million to support special needs students in the classroom; and
- \$10 million to support student mental health.

Key Messages from Dr. Yaffe:

- Dr. Yaffe spoke about students being in cohorts, stating that Ontario has flattened the curve and it is "not healthy" for children to remain at home and they need to return for their

physical and mental well-being.

- Dr. Yaffe said it is recommended that students in grades four to twelve wear a cloth mask as a protective measure anywhere social distancing measures are not possible and indicated younger children will be encouraged, but not required, to do so.
- Dr. Yaffe said the government will hire as many as 500 additional public health nurses that will each be assigned to a "family of schools." The nurses will liaise with parents, parent councils, teachers and administrators. They will be deployed to various boards based on enrollment numbers.
- Asked by the media why mandatory testing for teachers would not take place when schools reopen, Dr. Yaffe said testing is only one component of preventing outbreaks and doing daily testing could "complicate the picture." She said, however, if they have even a suspected case in a school, all contacts would be tested regardless if they're symptomatic or not.

Reopening of Child Care:

- The province announced its plan to allow licensed childcare centres across Ontario to open at full capacity starting September 1, 2020. This decision was made in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the COVID-19 Command Table.
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres will also be permitted to reopen with in-person programming. Before- and after-school programs for school aged children will be permitted to operate with standard ratios and maximum group size requirements. These programs will be subject to health and safety protocols in order to keep kids safe.
- The enhanced health and safety procedures that were put in place as part of the reopening plan, will remain in place, and in some instances strengthened, to protect children, staff and families, including:
 - Requiring all childcare staff to wear masks at all times, effective September 1st;
 - Ensuring frequent cleaning of childcare centres;
 - Screening of children and staff before entering a childcare facility;
 - Maintaining attendance records for rigorous contact tracing and coordination with local public health authorities;
 - Ensuring frequent hand washing and proper hand hygiene for children and staff; and
 - Establishing clear and rigid case management protocols in the event a staff member or child becomes ill, or tests positive for COVID-19.

Other Announcements:

A number of other announcements were released today, including:

- [Canada and Ontario Invest in Affordable Housing in Peel Region](#): The governments of Canada and Ontario are investing over \$23.5 million in two new affordable housing developments in Peel Region, providing 219 homes for individuals, families, seniors and people with disabilities.
- [Ontario Building A Safer and Stronger Long-Term Care System](#): The province released two reports and announced new initiatives that further deliver on recommendations made by the Honourable Eileen E. Gillese, Commissioner of the Long-Term Care Homes Public Inquiry. The "[Report Back on the Gillese Inquiry](#)" & the "[Long-Term Care Staffing Study Report](#)."

Federal Developments

In lieu of an in-person update to the media, [Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, issued a statement](#). The statement includes an overview of cases in Canada (provided below) and cases worldwide, and notes this week marks six months since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern and Canada announced its first case of COVID-19.

In a [separate statement](#), Dr. Tam reminds individuals to remain aware of the risks for exposure in their area and make informed decisions based on the advice and recommendations of their local public health authority. Dr. Tam's statement also includes additional information and resources on COVID-19 epidemiology and tips on reducing risks for infection and spreading the virus.

Ontario boards with secondary schools operating on adapted model:

- Toronto and Toronto Catholic
- Peel and Dufferin-Peel Catholic
- York and York Catholic
- Durham and Durham Catholic
- Halton and Halton Catholic
- Waterloo and Waterloo Catholic
- Thames Valley and London District Catholic
- Ottawa-Carleton and Ottawa Catholic
- Hamilton-Wentworth and Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic
- Niagara and Niagara Catholic
- Greater Essex County and Windsor-Essex Catholic
- Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est and Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario

The remaining school boards in Ontario will be allowed to reopen for classes five days per week with full attendance as these boards "typically have small enrollment."

Summary of Trends in Ontario and Cases in Canada

Trends in Ontario Cases:

- The province is reporting fewer than 100 new COVID-19 cases for the second straight day.
- Ottawa and Windsor-Essex reported the most new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, with 15 new infections. Peel Region reported 12 new cases, while Toronto reported 10.
- Twenty-eight of the province's 34 public health units saw five or fewer new cases, while 17 of those 28 reported no additional cases at all.

Cases in Ontario:

- Total number of cases: 39,075 cases; an increase of 89 cases
- Resolved: 34,906 (89.3%); 165 new cases resolved
- Deaths: sadly, 2,772 people have died
- Hospitalized: 84 people are hospitalized; 27 are in intensive care and of those, 16 are on a ventilator
- Long-term care homes (according to iPHIS): 17 active outbreaks; 12 confirmed cases in residents; 37 confirmed cases in staff; 1,844 deaths among residents and 8 among staff
- Lab testing: 2,141,939 completed; 27,676 tests completed in the last 24 hours; 28,267 are currently under investigation

Cases in Canada:

- Total number of cases: 115,470; an increase of 476
- Resolved: 100,465 (87%)
- Deaths: 8,917 (7.7%)
- People tested per million: 104,992
- Percent Positivity: 2.8%

Please note that the privacy and security of email communication cannot be guaranteed. Please refrain from using email messages to send personal information.

Vision: A healthier future for all.

Mission: Working with Grey Bruce communities to protect and promote health.

Core Values: Effective communication, Partnership, Respectful Relationships, Quality and Innovation, Integrity, Leadership

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Media Release

August 19, 2020

Grey Bruce Top Doctor Facebook Live with Parents and Guardians of School-Aged Children

Grey Bruce Medical Officer of Health Dr Ian Arra will join Lori Wilder, Director Bluewater District School Board and Gary O'Donnell, Director Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board for a Facebook Live forum on safe and successful school re-opening.

The event will be hosted on the Grey Bruce Health Unit Facebook Live page starting at **7:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 26, 2020**. The session will be recorded and made available on the Grey Bruce Health Unit YouTube channel.

Questions for the participants can be forwarded to the Grey Bruce Health Unit through Facebook message, through the 'Contact Us' page on our website, or by email to publichealth@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca.

"We want to support families as they consider the decision to send their child or children back to school in September." Says Grey Bruce Top Doc, Ian Arra. "Returning to school is vital for the child's education and for their overall wellbeing. At the same time there are a number of questions to consider about their families' health and safety."

We have a relatively exceptional situation in Grey and Bruce. We achieved high level of prevention of transmission and optimal control over the outbreak. As we move forward, the priority for Grey Bruce Public Health and the local school community is to continue to work together to help built a safe environment for school staff and for children to learn.

For More Information:

Dr. Ian Arra

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

To arrange to speak with Dr. Arra, please contact Drew Ferguson at:

519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 ext. 1269 or d.ferguson@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

A healthier future for all.

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