



## COVID-19 Update

Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Acting Medical Officer of Health

April 17, 2020 at 11:30 a.m.

### Overall Trends

- I am said to report that we have had 4 more deaths in our community since my last update on Wednesday.
  - All were residents in long-term care facilities and over the age of 70
- Sadly, we can see the number of deaths increase even if outbreaks are coming under control
  - This because deaths occur later... usually days subsequent to when people become ill... which is often several days after transmission of the virus has occurred.
- It doesn't lessen the impact though. Each person who has passed way was someone's loved one.
- I wish to express my sincere condolences to the families, friends and caregivers of those who have passed.
- We are still at 14 long-term care or retirement homes in outbreak
  - We have a few homes which may be coming out of outbreak very shortly (e.g. today), and if they do, it will be indicated on our dashboard starting tomorrow morning.
- Overall, we have 399 positive cases in Waterloo Region.
- Of the 399 total cases, we now have 138 resolved cases.

### Expanded testing

- The Province has continued to increase testing capacity and has subsequently provided updated guidance on testing.
- The prioritized groups for testing have been expanded.
- They include the previously prioritized groups and those living in more vulnerable, congregate settings including:
  - Hospital inpatients;

- Residents of long-term care and retirement homes;
- Health care workers, caregivers, care providers, paramedics, police and firefighters;
- Indigenous communities;
- Other congregate living centres, including homeless shelters, and group homes;
- In addition, the following groups are now included:
  - Symptomatic persons living in the same household as a health care worker, including those employed in long-term care or retirement homes or a first responder
  - Specific vulnerable populations, including patients undergoing chemotherapy or hemodialysis and requiring transplants, as well as pregnant persons, newborns and cross-border workers; and
  - Essential workers
    - That is, those employed in an essential workplace, as defined by the Province
- **Where to get tested:**
  - Health care workers, including those in long-term care and retirement homes, and first responders can call Public Health to be scheduled at one of the hospital assessment clinics in the region.
  - For those in the other groups:
    - Our two community assessment centres can now provide assessment and testing for these groups.
    - The community assessment centres will continue to operate through referral from primary care and by appointment
    - People are asked to contact their primary care practitioner or a walk-in clinic for a phone or virtual visit.
    - Their practitioner can then refer them to one of the assessment centres for a booked appointment.
  - If you don't have a health card, please contact Region of Waterloo Public Health at 519-575-4400

## **Closing remarks**

- I sincerely wish to thank our many health care and community partners for the incredible work they are doing each and every day.
- It is an immense effort, and I am truly grateful for their dedication, collaboration, and the outstanding service they provide to the citizens of our community.
- The work of Public Health has always been to build healthy and supportive communities in partnership.
- Our work is not done in isolation and our community partnerships are invaluable.

- Lastly, I would like to take a moment to sincerely thank the teams at Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services, and the Region
- Just like many of you, these teams are making personal sacrifices and working tirelessly to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community.
- Thank you to our health care and community partners, to our staff, and to everyone in our community, for all for your efforts.