



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

## **COVID-19 Update**

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

July 14, 2020 at 11:30 a.m.

### **Determinants of health update**

- Two weeks ago we released our neighbourhood level data.
- At that time, our initial analysis did not show any visible patterns of correlation between cases and some determinants of health indicators by neighbourhood. The most obvious pattern was the influence of long-term-care and retirement home outbreaks on COVID-19 case distribution.
- We have since completed a more in-depth and statistical analysis of our neighbourhood level data, and have determined that there is a moderate degree of correlation between COVID-19 rates and recent immigration status and, to a lesser extent, a correlation with low income.
- We have also analyzed the relationship between COVID-19 rates and the proportion of the population that is a visible minority, by neighbourhood, and did not find a correlation based on our cases to date. (The map of proportion of the population that is a visible minority will be uploaded to our website today.)
- Although these results indicate there is some correlation between recent immigrant status and low indicators, they do not fully explain the complex relationship between social determinants of health and COVID-19.
- There are many factors that influence COVID-19 incidence rates, and not all neighbourhoods with low income or with higher proportions of immigrants have higher COVID-19 rates.
- These results do not necessarily indicate an increased risk of COVID-19 infection at an individual level (e.g., Recent immigrants are not necessarily at increased risk of COVID).
- Finally, it should be noted that correlation does not equal causation. This does not mean that living in a neighbourhood with a higher proportion of recent immigrants causes increased risk for COVID-infections.
- These results are not surprising and are consistent with what has been found elsewhere in Ontario.

- We know that socio-economic factors, or social determinants of health, affect health in many ways.
- Our local results support a growing body of evidence that there are associations between COVID-19 and socio-demographic factors.
- We will need to continue to monitor and, once we have individual level data, explore additional analysis that could increase our understanding of risk factors.
- We will be ready to collect individual-level data on race, income, language and household size among COVID cases starting this week.

## Overall Trends

- The overall status of COVID-19 continues to move in the right direction.
- As of dashboard refresh at 10:30 a.m. this morning, we have 49 active cases in Waterloo Region.
- A total of 41,915 tests have been performed in Waterloo Region with positive results for approximately 3.2 per cent of all tests.
- A total of 1,179 cases or 88 per cent of positive cases in Waterloo Region are now resolved.
- And as of this morning's update, there is currently 1 outbreak in a long-term care home. There are no outbreaks in retirement homes, workplaces or congregate settings.
- Yesterday we reported another COVID-19 related death in our community.
  - I wish to extend my sincere condolences to the family and loved ones.
  - We know COVID-19 continues to circulate in our community. This is a reminder that it can cause serious illness and death.

## Closing remarks

- Yesterday, we learned that Waterloo Region will move into Stage 3 on Friday.
- We are able to move to Stage 3 because of your efforts to date.
- But we continue to have a collective responsibility, for each of us to do what we can, to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community.
  - We must continue to protect each other
  - We must move forward with the utmost vigilance.
- On Friday the size of gatherings will also be expanded. For both indoor and outdoor gatherings, we **must maintain physical distancing** between ourselves and anyone outside of our social circle.
  - Social circles or 'bubbles' remain at a limit of 10. These are the people you can physically interact with, also known as your close contacts.
- Our 'new normal' will remain even as we move forwards. All residents are reminded that:

- Face coverings are required in enclosed public places and transit, by the Region of Waterloo by-law unless you are exempt.
- A face shield is not a substitute for those who can wear a face covering.
- A face covering helps to contain your respiratory droplets.
- A face shield protects you from other people's droplets but it does not contain your droplets.
- If you would like to wear a face shield, you must also wear a face covering that covers your nose, mouth and chin.
- For those who cannot wear a face covering, a face shield is better than no face covering.
- I would like to thank everyone for their efforts.
- Let's continue to protect each other.
- Thank you.