



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

## COVID-19 Update

Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health  
Public Health and Emergency Services  
March 26, 2021

### Highlights

- Indicators remain relatively stable.
- We are now seeing secondary spread related to the large cluster of confirmed cases identified last week.
- We all must continue to limit our mobility, limit our close contacts, and avoid social gatherings to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

### Overall trends

- Based on our data, as of March 25, 2021:
- Our incidence rate of COVID-19 in Waterloo Region continues to remain relatively stable. To date, we have not experienced the increase in cases and hospitalisations seen in Ontario overall.
- The incidence rate is currently at approximately 38 cases per 100,000 per week.
- We are currently managing 254 active cases and 17 active outbreaks.
- Taking into account interim data, our latest per cent positivity is currently at 2.2 per cent.
- Our latest reproductive rate is currently at 0.9, which is under 1.
- We continue to monitor our indicators closely.
- The Province generally looks for stability of indicators for a couple of weeks before moving an area to lower level.

### Cluster

- Last week we announced that we had identified a large cluster of confirmed cases related to multiple social gatherings that were held at private residences in early March.
- Over the past week, confirmed cases associated with this cluster have continued to grow.
- We are now seeing secondary spread in multiple settings.

- At this time, there are now a total of 56 confirmed cases and 2 probable cases connected to the original cluster and secondary spread from the original cluster, including a total of 52 high-risk, close contacts.
- This cluster illustrates how easily, or quickly, COVID-19 can spread, when public health measures aren't practiced.
- It is a crucial reminder that we must keep up with these public health measures, especially reducing our contacts.
- Things like avoiding social gatherings, limiting our non-essential trips outside our homes, practicing physical distancing, and wearing face coverings are ways that we can limit our contacts and reduce the number of people who we may expose if we subsequently test positive.
- These measures help break the chain of transmission and slow the spread of COVID-19.

## **Variants of concern**

- To date, a total of 306 variant cases have been identified in Waterloo Region.
- Of that total, 22 cases have been confirmed for the B.1.1.7 variant.
- And the remaining 284 cases have screened positive for a variant.
- In Ontario, variants of concern account for more than half of all COVID-19 cases.
  - Cases, hospitalizations, and ICU admissions are increasing once again.
- While we have been able to slow the growth of variants in Waterloo Region, compared to the Provincial growth, variant cases are continuing to increase in our community.

## **Closing remarks**

- We are in a very crucial period right now.
- Spring is here, the weather is improving, and so many in our community are filled with hope for what comes next.
- But we must not let our guard down.
- We have seen what can happen and how quickly one case can lead to dozens, when public health measures are not practiced.
- For all upcoming holidays or celebrations, I continue to recommend that you celebrate only with your immediate household members and gather virtually, with all others.
- This is critically important to help slow the spread of the virus and maintain the progress we have made to date.
- By limiting your close contacts you are not only protecting yourself, you are protecting your loved ones, your friends, and your community.
- I know that this is difficult, but the actions of each and every one of us can and does make a difference.
- Thank you for all that you do.