COVID-19 Update

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Commissioner Public Health and Emergency Services
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Overall trends

- At this time, our rate of new cases is not accelerating.
- This is in no small part due to the efforts of our residents in Waterloo Region, for which I'm grateful.
- We remain however in a precarious state, similar to other mid-size regions in Ontario. Some regions are seeing continued increases in their rates.
- So we need to remain diligent with our public health practices.

Wilfrid Laurier University Outbreak

- On Oct. 12, Public Health declared an outbreak at the University both in residence and off campus.
- We now have a total of 16 cases associated with this outbreak.
- We have cases at the Clara Conrad Residence (with 3 wings in outbreak), at 2 other University Residences at least: Waterloo College Hall and 260 Regina, as well as off campus.
- They are either associated to previously linked study groups or are close contacts of cases themselves.
- Our investigation is ongoing and the numbers will be updated on a daily basis.
- All cases are being followed by Public Health and high risk contacts are being advised that they need to self-isolate and get tested.
- Public Health continues to recommend that everyone only have close contact with those they live with, for example, in their dorm or room, and physically distance and wear a face covering with everyone else.
- The safest thing to do when studying together is to study together virtually.
- If you choose to gather in person:
  - Maintain strict physical distancing and the wearing of face covering;
  - Keep the gathering as small as possible;
Use outdoor spaces as much as possible.

Public Health Precautions in Workplaces & Facilities

- Public Health follows up with every positive case. As many cases also work, we also follow up with various settings to reduce the risk of further spread.
- We have followed up with several dozens of workplaces.
- What we've noticed is that many workplaces are serious about ensuring appropriate public health measures are in place, in particular in areas where clients or patrons may be present.
- Public health precautions however are not always consistently applied in employee-only areas.
- Common areas where we've identified increased risk include:
  - Workers carpooling together
  - Workers coming to work while symptomatic, in some cases despite screening measures in the workplace
  - Not maintaining physical distancing in employee-only areas, such as in lunch rooms/break rooms and meeting rooms

It is important for employers and employees to stay vigilant with all recommended COVID measures at all times, in order to prevent spread and ensure that businesses can continue to safely remain open.

Carpooling

- If possible, don't carpool with those outside of your immediate family.
- If you need to carpool, limit the number of occupants in the vehicle, open the windows to create air flow and ensure that everyone in the vehicle is wearing a face covering if they are not from your immediate household.

Stay home if you are sick:

- Do not go to work if you are showing symptoms, even if they are mild symptoms.
- All businesses are required to screen workers and essential visitors entering the work environment at the beginning of their day, shift, or when an essential visitor arrives.
- If you are an employer – we ask that you support employees who need to stay home due to symptoms or isolation requirements

Break and lunch rooms:

- Stagger start times for shifts, breaks, and lunch times. Limit the number of people using lunchrooms at any one time to ensure physical distancing can be maintained.
- Ensure masks are worn at all times except when necessary to remove to eat or drink.
- Arrange tables so that they are at least two metres apart.
- Stagger seating at the tables to prevent people from directly facing each other
• Space out commonly used appliances (e.g., microwaves, toasters, etc.) in lunch/break rooms such that they are at least two metres apart.
• Disinfect high touch surfaces frequently and in between break/lunch changes, using a disinfectant approved by Health Canada

Closing remarks
• In Wave 2 of this pandemic, the recommended measures of physical distancing, wearing a mask, washing your hands, and avoiding close contact outside of your immediate household will be important.
• Maintaining all recommended public health measures in the workplace will be important.
• Thank-you for your efforts to date which have so far moderated our growth in cases.
• Let’s keep going, so we can reduce risks for those in our long-term care homes and other vulnerable settings, keep our schools and businesses open, and our medical procedures and surgeries continuing.
• Have an enjoyable, safe and physically distant weekend.