COVID-19 Update

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Highlights

- We have seen some increases to cases and outbreaks but overall trends remain fairly stable.
- Expanded eligibility for booster doses was announced this week to include additional high-risk groups in line with recommendations made by NACI.
- Last Friday, we launched a new feature on our COVID-19 summary dashboard that shows the impact of vaccinations in our community.

Overall trends

- We have seen some increases to cases and outbreaks but overall trends remain fairly stable.
- The increases are not unexpected with colder temperatures and more people spending time indoors together.
- Currently our weekly case rate is approximately 20 cases per 100,000.
- We are managing 127 active cases and 8 active outbreaks at this time.

Vaccine boosters

- On Wednesday, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Moore announced expanded eligibility for COVID-19 booster doses.
- This expansion reflects the recommendations made by NACI last week to expand eligibility to additional high-risk groups.
- Effect immediately, the following groups are now eligible to receive a third, or booster dose, of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine six months after their second dose:
  - All Ontarians 70 years of age and older
  - First Nations, Métis and Inuit adults and non-Indigenous adults in their households
  - Health care workers and designated essential caregivers in congregate settings
  - Individuals who received a complete series of a viral vector vaccine such as AstraZeneca or Janssen
• These groups have been prioritized for a booster dose based on the increased risk for these populations related to the gradual waning immunity six months after receiving their second dose, increased risk of severe illness, and/or increased risk of exposure.
• These groups join those who are already eligible because of a qualifying medical condition or as residents of high-risk congregate settings.
• Ontario is planning to expand eligibility for a booster dose to all Ontarians over time.
• Evidence continues to show that a complete two-dose COVID-19 vaccine provides strong protection against COVID-19 infection and severe outcomes, including against the Delta variant. Booster doses offer an extra layer of protection against the Delta variant.

Vaccine Impact

• Last Friday, we launched a new feature on our COVID-19 summary dashboard that shows the impact of vaccinations in our community.
• The new tab ‘Vaccine Impact’ will be updated every two weeks, on Friday at 1:30 p.m. and includes local and/or Provincial data that shows how COVID-19 vaccines work to protect against COVID-19 and reduce the risk of severe outcomes. The next update will be Friday, November 12.
• The data shows:
  o Cases and severe outcomes prevented by vaccines
  o Relative rates of infection and hospitalization by vaccination status
  o The number of hospitalizations and number ICU admissions by vaccination status.
• We estimated that the COVID-19 vaccine has prevented almost 7,000 cases in Waterloo Region.
• Since December 22, 2020 86% of hospitalizations and ICU admissions have been individuals who were not yet vaccinated.
• We can see the positive impact vaccines are having on the trajectory of COVID-19 in our community.

Closing remarks

• As a community we’ve made great progress together to push back against the Delta variant.
• We have to remember that even though we have very high vaccination rates in our community more than 100,000 people in our community are not yet eligible for the vaccine or have not been vaccinated.
• A number of key public health measures continue to be in place to limit and control the spread of COVID-19 and we must remain committed to practicing them.
• Let’s keep protecting each other.
• Thank you.