



# **SPEAKING NOTES**

## **COVID-19 Community Update – Chair Karen Redman**

**Mar. 19, 2021**

### **Welcome**

Welcome everyone to this week's community update.

I'm pleased to welcome Inspector Jen Davis, Lead of the Command Operations Team for the vaccine task force to our panel today. We're happy to have Inspector Davis' expertise as we continue to expand our sites.

### **Anti-Racism**

We are deeply saddened by the recent shootings in Georgia and continue to be troubled by the rise in anti-Asian violence that we have seen during the pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted and magnified inequities that have always existed. The roots of this violence are deep and familiar: white supremacy, xenophobia and imperialism.

Anti-Asian racism has a long history and is both interpersonal and systemic. The increased racist language from the onset of the pandemic, with the virus being labelled "China virus" or "Wuhan flu," has been incredibly damaging.

According to a Stats Canada report, Canadians with Asian backgrounds are more likely to report noticing increased racial or ethnic harassment against them since the start of the pandemic. More than 30 per cent of respondents



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who identified as Chinese perceived an increase in harassment or attacks on the basis of race, ethnicity or skin colour.

We have seen this here in Waterloo Region as well, with some individuals being the subject of racist comments on social media and emails containing inappropriate and abusive comments.

We understand that bias can be unconscious or unintentional and that racism is the combination of social and institutional power, plus racial prejudice. Having conversations that confront this bias requires courage, respect and compassion, and may not always be comfortable.

The Region of Waterloo is purposefully striving to identify, discuss and challenge issues of race, color, ethnicity, and the impact(s) they have on everyone.

The most important thing is to continue this advocacy beyond the pandemic, by continuing to support racialized communities, and by making them visible outside of conversations around COVID-19.

## **Vaccinations**

I'm thrilled to share our vaccine milestone where we surpassed 50,000 vaccines administered in Waterloo Region as of yesterday. We started Phase 1 on December 22 vaccinating vulnerable seniors in long-term care homes, as well as the staff who cared for them. Now we are moving towards



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Phase 2 and we are now seeing residents 70-79 years pre-registering to book an appointment for their COVID-19 vaccination.

## **Vaccinations**

Additional vaccination clinics will open this month. On March 22 the largest clinic in Waterloo Region will open at the SmartCentre, 66 Pinebush Road in Cambridge in the old RONA location.

The vaccination clinic at The Boardwalk will be moving into a larger space at the same location and will be expanding its hours and immunization capacity in the coming weeks and months.

Vaccination clinics for First Nation, Métis and Inuit residents of Waterloo Region are taking place today and tomorrow at Anishnabeg Outreach in Kitchener; and at Regional Headquarters in Kitchener next week.

More vaccination locations are underway including primary care sites to serve North Dumfries and Elmira. Also, stay tuned for updates on mobile vaccination teams who are vaccinating seniors across Waterloo Region in congregate care settings on a daily basis.

Registration information is available on the Region's website or you can call our 24/7 contact centre at 519-575-4400.



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## Enforcement update

The Provincial Multi-Ministry Enforcement Campaign concluded this week. While we're waiting for the final summary, we know there were more than 500 visits made by Provincial enforcement teams to restaurants, retail, personal service settings and fitness businesses, between March 11 and March 16. A summary will be included in next weeks update.

There have been 6 enforcement actions since the last media update. These do not include any charges from the Provincial campaign.

- 5 charges are for the reporting period March 11 to March 17
- 1 charge is from the previous reporting period, but was not reported at the time of the update
- City of Waterloo By-Law issued 4 tickets at three separate private residences for gatherings – total payable is \$880 each
- Region of Waterloo Public Health issued 1 ticket to Sansotei Ramen Restaurant in Kitchener for Failing to Comply With a Continued Order, regarding physical distancing, PPE, screening and no safety plan available – total payable is \$880.
- Region of Waterloo Security issued 1 ticket at 150 Main St. for Failing to Comply with the Face Covering by-law - \$240 fine



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**Now we will move on to our weekly update from Medical Officer of Health Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang.**

**Vaccine Task Force Chair, Deputy Chief Shirley Hilton update**

**Special guest Inspector Jen Davis, Lead of the Command Operations Team for the vaccine task force.**