



Coordinated COVID-19 Response Newsletter

June 19, 2020

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep local stakeholders informed about the coordinated response to the evolving COVID-19 situation. The Region, area municipalities and local community partners are meeting regularly to make sure our pandemic response efforts are coordinated and aligned. This work is being done through a Regional Pandemic Control Group which coordinates the efforts and actions of five other sector control groups which are described further in this document.

Regional Pandemic Control Group (RPCG)

The Regional Pandemic Control Group has been meeting regularly to share information, facilitate sharing of resources, and guide the community-wide pandemic response in five areas: health, community support, critical infrastructure, the municipalities and communications. The following sections provide an update on these five areas that are working together to ensure an effective and efficient response to the COVID-19 pandemic in our community.

1. Health Sector Control Group (HSCG)

The Region of Waterloo Public Health continues to work closely with local hospitals, health care partners, the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario and many community partners to respond to [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) in Waterloo Region.

COVID-19 Dashboard: Public Health continues to refine the COVID-19 dashboard on the Region's website: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/COVID19summary. This Dashboard illustrates the trends and is updated Monday to Friday at 10:30 a.m.

The Importance of Continuing to Follow Public Health Measures

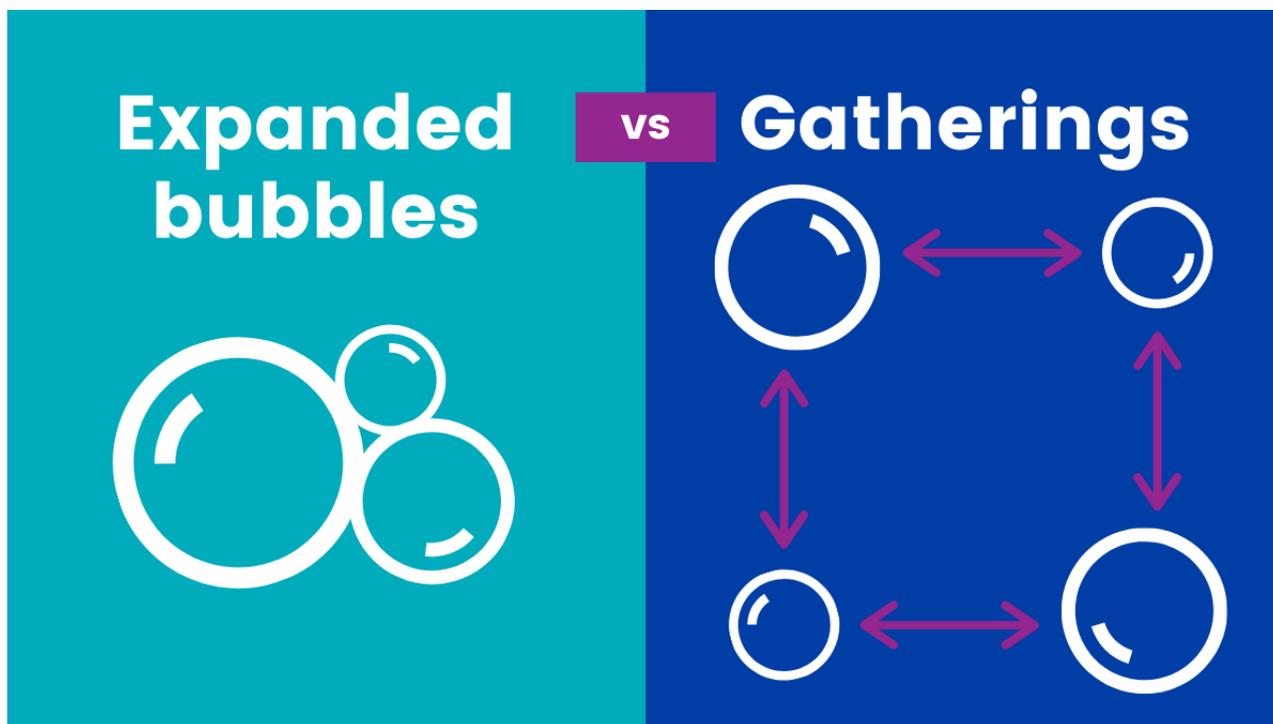
Stage 2 has certainly opened up a lot of opportunities to interact with friends and neighbours again. Restaurants and bars have opened up patios and despite the capacity of the patios being reduced, it certainly feels like the summer season and the end of the pandemic but, DO NOT be fooled. The pandemic isn't over and our ongoing diligence to practicing physical distancing, continuing to wash our hands often, wearing a non-medical mask or face covering when physical distancing is difficult, especially when indoors or using public transit, is imperative to keep the number of new COVID-19 cases low. While it is important to recognize that not everyone can wear a mask, those of us who can should wear one to protect everyone around us. #FaceMaskFriday



Bubbles Vs Gatherings

One of the more difficult challenges of the pandemic has been our inability to connect with family and friends. Many of us have felt isolated and alone. Recently, the Province announced that is now permitted to create a social circle or bubble of up to 10 people. Everyone living in the same household is in the same bubble—other family members, roommates, babysitter or caregiver. Within your bubble, physical distancing isn't required, you can hug and touch members of your bubble and continue with frequent hand washing and cough etiquette. If less than 10 people, you can add members to your bubble. But do so carefully, when you add to your bubble, it means that everyone in your bubble is now connected to that individual and their bubble. For more information on social circles or bubbles, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/create-social-circle-during-covid-19>.

Gatherings are different from bubbles. The Province has increased the number of people attending a gathering to 10 people but, gatherings are people from different bubbles coming together. It is critical that physical distancing be maintained within gatherings, meaning no hugging or touching at gatherings. Mask are recommended for any gatherings where physical distancing may be difficult to maintain.



Who to contact if you have questions or need additional information:
Please email publichealth@regionofwaterloo.ca.

2. Community Support Control Group (CSCG)

The Region, the area municipalities and many community partners have taken action to support the health and safety of vulnerable people affected by COVID-19. The Community Support Control Group is addressing the following service areas: Food Services; Housing and Homelessness Services; Children's Services; Psychosocial and Spiritual Support Services; Animal Care Services. Below is this week's update from the Community Support Control Group. For more information, visit:

www.regionofwaterloo.ca/communitysupportsCOVID19.



For more information on each of the service areas, please visit the [interactive dashboard](#) on the Community Support Control Group webpage.

Emergency child care

- As announced by the Province, emergency child care will end on June 26. Families in emergency child care continue to be supported through the transition into regular child care with their former providers.
- Families who are looking for space or need financial help to pay for care are encouraged to:
 - Apply for licensed child care through [OneList Waterloo Region](#). At this time, there are spaces available in licensed home child care. [Apply for child care subsidy](#).

Food services

Last week's food services numbers include:

- 4,159 community meals were distributed.
- 1,579 food hampers were distributed at 15 locations throughout Waterloo Region. A food hamper is a 3-4 days' supply of food.
- 80,725 pounds of food were distributed.
- 3,710 non-perishable and perishable emergency food hampers were packed at The Food Bank of Waterloo Region.
- There were 44 deliveries to community programs and agency partners in Waterloo Region.
- Hamper delivery is available for people in the community who are unable to leave their homes due to sickness, mobility issues or self-isolation. Last week, 124 deliveries were made to individuals' homes.

Housing and homelessness

- Medical staff have now completed 3,263 COVID assessments and conducted 342 medical visits for people experiencing homelessness.

Animal care services

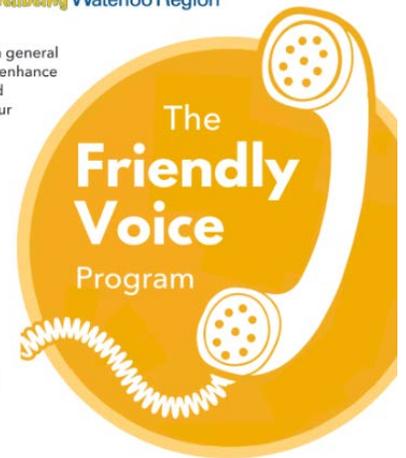
- Since March 15, 407 animals have received emergency pet food. 44 animals have been provided temporary emergency care due to Covid-19.

The Friendly Voice is a general wellbeing check-in to enhance social connections and reduce loneliness in our community.

How To Register

To register for the Friendly Voice program, please call 519-743-6333 ask reception how to get started!

Reception is open 8:30 am-6:00 pm, but Friendly Voice session times may vary.



Free over the phone support for anyone in the Waterloo Region who's feeling isolated or lonely.

Psychosocial and spiritual group

- A list of [translated materials](#) on staying safe during COVID-19 and [multilingual psychosocial supports](#) were created and published on the Immigration Partnership's website. These resources were also circulated through various networks and are available to download.
- [The Friendly Voice program](#) continues to provide general wellbeing check-ins to provides social connection to reduce loneliness and isolation in the community. It was developed in response to COVID-19 impacts on the community. To register for the Friendly Voice program, please call 519-743-6333 and ask reception how to get started!

3. Critical Infrastructure Control Group (CICG)

The Region of Waterloo and area Municipalities continue to maintain all critical services and maintain legislative requirements while performing these services.

Active Transportation and Assistance for Businesses (Patios and use of road/parking spots): The group working on potential options to provide improved active transportation opportunities met twice recently. Discussions at the meeting were focused on taking advantage of the current lower-than normal traffic volumes and consider the temporary use of existing road space to provide space for active transportation while maintaining physical distancing. A recent check of traffic volumes at nine Regional road locations indicates that traffic volumes are at 78% of pre-COVID values. The additional space provided could help to encourage residents to either start or continue using active transportation during the COVID crisis and beyond. In collaboration with area municipalities, Regional staff have identified several Regional roads where curb lanes can be "re-purposed" to provide dedicated temporary bike lanes. A report in this regard was presented to Council at the June 16 Committee of the Whole meeting. The Committee made a decision to refer the matter to Regional Council on June 24, 2020 to provide an [opportunity for the public to comment](#) on the proposals.

Waste Management: The waste transfer stations in Cambridge and Waterloo continue to remain operational during normal operating hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday. Gate 1 Waterloo also remains open for business drop-off on Saturdays, during normal operating hours of 8:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. Recycling, green bin, yard waste and garbage collection continues as normal. Currently the every second-week garbage bag/can limit continues to be temporarily increased from four to six bags. The Region is providing green bins and blue boxes for new homeowners at the household hazardous waste drop off locations in Cambridge and Waterloo. We continue to ask that citizens remember to respect the environment and do not dump or burn garbage or yard waste.



Grand River Transit (GRT): GRT continues to encourage customers to wear a mask or face covering while riding transit to protect those around them even if they do not have symptoms. A “Let’s protect each other” digital and radio advertising campaign and new website page explaining how we can all ride safely during COVID-19 was launched Wednesday, June 17. Details at www.grt.ca. Summer service changes will go into effect on Monday, June 22. GRT customer service locations; 105 King St. and Ainslie St. terminal are open to the public. Hours of service are: 9:30 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday to Friday, and 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. Customer service at 250 Strasburg Road remains closed to the public.

Water/Wastewater: Water demands are trending higher this time of year with increased outdoor water use. The Conservation By-law with once per week lawn watering is now in effect as of May 31 to September 30. The private well water testing program is ongoing and related information is on the [Region’s website](#). As business and buildings are starting to re-open, building owners and operators are responsible for the water quality in their building. In most cases, flushing buildings with safe drinking water that has normal chlorine levels is sufficient for cleaning the water system. More information can be found on the [Region’s web site](#) on important step for re-opening your buildings water supply.

Capital/Construction projects: Projects are well underway throughout the Waterloo region. Currently, construction is underway on about 40 major Region of Waterloo construction projects on roads, bridges, transit, water, wastewater and waste management facilities. More construction work is scheduled to start in the coming months, with a total of about 50 major construction projects planned for this year. That is about the same number as previous years. Planning and design work is also ongoing for future capital projects. This includes public engagement and consultation using a combination of online tools, mail outs, emails and telephone. More information is available on the Region’s website and at engagewr.ca. We ask that you continue to visit the Region of Waterloo’s [website](#) for any road closure information to assist you with planning your essential travels.

4. Municipal Control Group (MCG)

The Chief Administrative Officers of all municipalities have been meeting frequently to discuss pertinent issues and to coordinate operational decisions on the local municipal response to COVID-19. The current focus of the team is on coordinated recovery planning work to ensure an eventual safe and effective return to normal operations based on public health guidance and the Ontario Government’s Plan to Reopen the Province. Recent activities have included:

- Reopening facilities permitted in stage 2 of phase 2 of the Plan to Reopen the Province, which was enacted on June 8, in a prioritized and phased manner.
- Finalizing criteria to assist heads of Council in their determination of when it may be appropriate to rescind a state of emergency declaration.
- Coordinating local economic development recovery efforts, in partnership with BESTWR and other economic development stakeholders.



5. Communications Control Group (CCG)

The Communications Control Group (CCG) meets to share relevant information about COVID-19 communications. The group is comprised of communication leaders from public sector organizations across Waterloo Region (hospitals, municipalities, school boards, post-secondary, police, BESTWR, etc.) Activities this week included:

At the June 15 meeting, the CCG discussed:

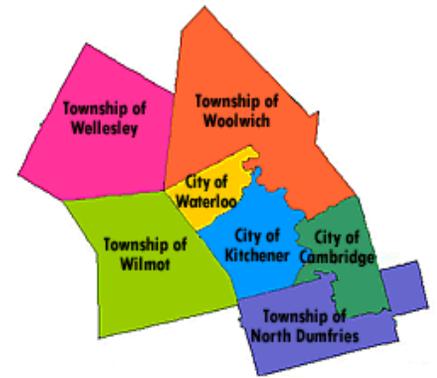
- Public sector organizations are working on public and employee communication and return to work plans. Municipalities are beginning to reopen administrative buildings and some programs and services. Public communication about these details is ongoing.
- Public Health continues to urge residents to wash hands, [physically distance](#), [wear masks](#), etc. as workplaces and businesses reopen.
- Five cooling centres opened during the recent heat warning. Community partners were given an update on process and response during heat warnings.
- Education sector working to determine how and when to welcome back students.
- Local business support ongoing, including initiatives to help small businesses in Waterloo Region.

Public Health and Corporate Communication teams continue to share important COVID-19 information with media, residents and staff through our website, social media accounts and regular media briefings.

To see the sector specific resources for work places visit,
<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/coronavirus-resources-for-workplaces.aspx>

Municipal Services

All municipalities in Waterloo region are continuing to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. The Region and all area municipalities have made significant changes to services and programming. Closures, cancellations, news releases, important contacts, and frequently asked questions can be found on the following websites:



Region of Waterloo Response to COVID-19

<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/covid-19-information-centre.aspx>

City of Cambridge's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.cambridge.ca/en/your-city/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#>

City of Kitchener's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.kitchener.ca/en/city-services/storm-and-emergency-updates.aspx#>

City of Waterloo's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.waterloo.ca/en/living/covid-19-response.aspx#>

Township of North Dumfries' Response to COVID-19

<https://www.northdumfries.ca/en/index.aspx>

Township of Wellesley's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.wellesley.ca/en/living-here/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19.aspx#>

Township of Wilmot's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.wilmot.ca/en/living-here/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#>

Township of Woolwich Response to COVID-19

<https://www.woolwich.ca/en/township-services/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#>

Complaints about compliance to COVID-19 orders should be directed to the [Region of Waterloo Call Center](#) – 24 hours /7 days per week at 519-575-4400

Community Updates

A list of [Translated materials](#) on staying safe during COVID and [Multilingual Psychosocial Supports](#) was created and published on the Immigration Partnership’s website under [“Multilingual and other Resources for Immigrants and Service Providers”](#). It is also available to download.

Cooling Centres

Cooling centres will provide space for residents to cool down during an [extreme heat](#) warning. There is no expectation of extra amenities or services at these centres. As facilities begin to re-open and cooling centres are identified, they will be added to this page. www.regionofwaterloo.ca/CoolingCentres

<p>Kitchener Don McLaren Arena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: 61 Green Street, Kitchener • Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Monday to Friday) <p>Region of Waterloo headquarters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location 150 Frederick Street, Kitchener • Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday) • Note: Please use cafeteria entrance off Ahrens Street 	
<p>Cambridge Region of Waterloo building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: 150 Main Street, Cambridge • Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday) 	<p>Waterloo Adult Recreation Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: 185 King Street South, Waterloo • Hours: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Daily)
<p>North Dumfries North Dumfries Community Complex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: 2958 Greenfield Road, Ayr • Hours: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Monday to Friday) 	<p>Wilmot Township of Wilmot Administration Complex</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location: 60 Snyders Road West, Baden • Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday)

Drive-thru COVID-19 testing in Kitchener

Staff with Grand River Hospital (GRH) have set up a COVID-19 drive-thru testing centre at the Catalyst 137 parking lot on 137 Glasgow St. in Kitchener. Testing is not inside the Catalyst building. People are asked to follow directions from security staff, who will be on-site.

People can get tested any day of the week from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. No appointment is necessary to get tested and walk-ups can be accommodated.

Cars with multiple people in need of testing are asked to let the security staff know as they enter the parking lot. People who are deaf or hard of hearing will be required to fill out a [registration form](#) before arriving to the drive-thru clinic. Forms will also be provided on site.



United Way Waterloo Region Communities will accept applications for the Emergency Community Support Fund June 22nd until July 7th.

This fund is to help charities and qualified donees serve and support vulnerable Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been made available by the Government of Canada and funding streams are being administered by United Way Centraide Canada, Community Foundations of Canada, and the Canadian Red Cross in communities from coast to coast to coast. United Way WRC is proud to support this important investment by the Federal Government.

Who can apply?

United Way WRC will fund organizations that provide direct services to vulnerable populations who are impacted by COVID-19. Your organization is eligible to receive funding if your organization has a charitable number or is otherwise a qualified donee, and is providing supports and services to meet immediate community needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding is intended to support frontline community service organizations providing services to support vulnerable Canadians, including low-income seniors, women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, refugees, Indigenous peoples, members of racialized communities, and more.

Funds may be used for immediate needs and priorities related to the impact of COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to, services such as:

1. Preparing and delivering meals and/or food hampers.
2. Supporting individuals in accessing income supports and financial coaching.
3. Providing home care or personal support for seniors, elders, and persons with disabilities.
4. Mental health & wellness supports, including crisis counselling and peer support.
5. Personal safety supports, including for those living in or escaping situations of violence.
6. Access to safe transport for essential appointment and errands.
7. And others.

What types of activities could be funded?

1. Community outreach and engagement.
2. Developing and/or delivering new programs, services or delivery models as a result of COVID-19.
3. Sharing information and knowledge.
4. Engaging and recruiting volunteers.

How to apply

Round two will be open for applications June 22, 2020 to July 7, 2020. We anticipate a high volume of requests and are working to ensure that all requests are reviewed as quickly as possible.

[Applications](#) will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. on the final day of each round of applications.

Questions?

Please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Application Guide](#). For questions not addressed in these resources, please contact Nancy Bird at nbird@uwaywrc.ca or [519-888-6100 ext. 204](tel:519-888-6100).