



Coordinated COVID-19 Response Newsletter

June 05, 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 Saturday at 10:30 a.m.

Testing Update: Provincial Testing Strategy—On May 29, 2020 the Province introduced its new COVID-19 Testing Strategy. The Strategy has three goals: Increase testing to identify anyone with COVID-19 and spread in the community; aggressively track and trace contacts to contain spread; and population surveillance in order to provide an ongoing evidence base to inform decision-making. The Province intends to reach their testing goals by continuing to focus on improving access to Assessment Centres for testing; creating targeting testing campaign such as enhanced testing for essential workers including hospital staff, first responders, long term care & retirement home staff, and expanding to include other sectors such as food suppliers, major retailers and auto manufacturers; and outbreak management. Public Health plays a key role in case and contact management that is key to containing





outbreaks in specific settings.

You do not need a referral from a primary care provider or Public Health to access testing. All the assessment centres take self-referrals. If you would like, you can use the [self-assessment tool](#) or speak to your primary care provider, to help determine if you need to seek care or testing.

To see the full list of Waterloo Region Assessment Centres, visit <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/community-assessment-centres.aspx> Region of Waterloo Public Health will contact individuals who test positive for COVID-19.

Local Testing—[Assessment Centres](#):

Clinical assessment and testing is available for:

- Anyone with at least one symptom.
- Anyone concerned they have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Anyone who is at risk of exposure to COVID-19 through their employment (e.g. health care workers, grocery store employees, food processing employees).

All individuals who have been tested can review their results online through the [Ministry of Health](#).

Outbreak Management

The Province’s Testing Strategy identifies a key role for public health in Outbreak Management. Since the start of the pandemic response, Public Health has provided outbreak management and support to congregate settings such as long term care, retirement homes, group homes and day cares. As restrictions ease and workplaces open up and COVID-19 continues to circulate in our community, we can anticipate more outbreaks to occur in workplace settings. To date, we have three outbreaks (2 active, 1 over) in Waterloo region. None of the workplaces have been open to the general public and there is no increased risk to the general public. However, should there be an increased risk to the public beyond the general risk due to community circulation of COVID, we would provide notification to the community. In the event of a workplace outbreak, impacted staff are notified and Public Health works with the Ministry of Labour, which has oversight for workplace health and safety, to investigate and ensure the implementation of appropriate measures to bring the outbreak under control.

Outbreaks in workplaces have been added to our [COVID-19 Dashboard](#). Outbreaks are listed by category/type of workplace in aggregate form. The dashboard will be updated twice weekly on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Paramedic Services

Paramedic Services and in particular, Community Paramedicine program have played a key role in assisting with access to testing for those who experience a variety of challenges. Since May 17, 2020, the Community Paramedicine program has completed over 460 swabs both in congregate settings and for individuals who have access or mobility issues. The program has provided an additional testing option for some of our most vulnerable residents in Waterloo region.

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. This group's mandate is to:

- Identify populations that may require additional supports during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Identify the community supports that will be provided to those populations; and
- Determine which organizations will coordinate and provide those supports.



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.

Emergency child care

- 300 children have been placed in emergency child care, with 195 in licensed home child care and 105 in licensed child care centres.

Food services

- Last week, 1,565 food hampers were distributed at 15 locations throughout Waterloo Region. A food hamper is a 3-4 days' supply of food.
- 105,243 pounds of food were distributed to 44 community programs and agency partners.
- 3,730 non-perishable and perishable emergency food hampers were packed at The Food Bank.
- 128 food hamper deliveries were made to the homes of people who are unable to leave due to sickness, mobility issues or self-isolation.

Housing and homelessness

- Medical staff on the Sanguen Bus have now completed 2,712 COVID assessments and 314 medical visits for people experiencing homelessness.
- Additional public washroom access is now available. The full list with hours of availability is on the [CSCG webpage](#).

Animal care services

- Since the pandemic began, 366 animals have now received emergency pet food.
- 31 animals have been provided temporary emergency care due to COVID-19.

Pandemic volunteer program

- 69 people have applied to become volunteers since registration for the pandemic volunteer program opened last week.

- Agencies that have requested support are being contacted. Volunteers will begin to be deployed to agencies next week.

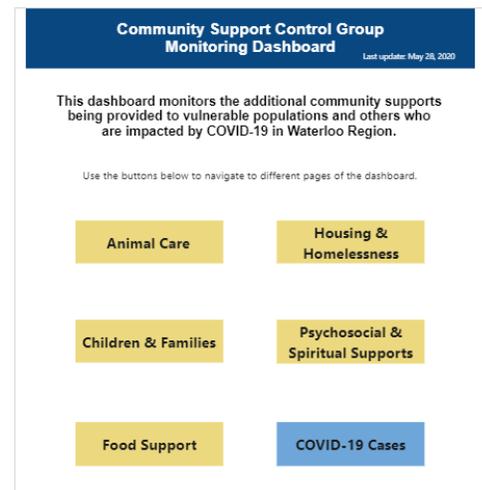
Psychosocial and spiritual group

- Recognizing that people continue to struggle with the impacts of the pandemic, a [comprehensive list of mental health and counselling supports](#) are available during COVID-19.
- A complete list of COVID-19 multilingual resources has been developed. [COVID-19 Resources Available in Multiple Languages.](#)
- A list of multi language mental health services available in Waterloo Region has been developed. [Multi-Language Psychosocial Supports During COVID-19 in Waterloo Region.](#)

CSCG Monitoring Dashboard

An interactive [dashboard](#) on the Community Support Control Group webpage now has statistics available and will be updated weekly. The dashboard includes data in the following areas:

- Number of pets helped by emergency boarding, the pet food bank and emergency care.
- Enrollment in emergency child care.
- Community meal program and food hamper distribution and delivery.
- COVID-19 mobile assessments and COVID-19 cases among people experiencing homelessness.
- Number of people accessing psychosocial and spiritual supports.



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 67% 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.



Grand River Transit (GRT): Fare collection resumed on all GRT buses, ION light rail and MobilityPLUS on Monday June 1. For operator and customer safety, temporary barriers have been installed on all buses. Contactless fare payment with fare cards is still preferred but cash will continue to be accepted on buses. Customers who do not have an EasyGO fare card can now get one by filling out the new online form at grt.ca/OrderCard. GRT customer service locations; 105 King St. and Ainslie St. terminal have reopened 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. 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.

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 is also 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. Bi-weekly bulky/large item collection was reinstated as of May 25. The Region is making temporary arrangements to provide green bins and blue boxes available for new homeowners at the household hazardous waste drop off locations in Cambridge and Waterloo. Staff are also reviewing when free compost pickup by residents can resume. We continue to ask that citizens remember to respect the environment and do not dump or burn garbage or yard waste.

Water/Wastewater: Water demands are continuing to trend upward as demands increase this time of year for outdoor water use. The Conservation By-law with once per week lawn watering is now in effect as of May 31. The private well water testing program is ongoing and related information is on the Region's website.

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:

- Exploring the potential to submit applications under the Emergency Community Support Fund.
- Reviewing the status of cultural programming and events in July and August.
- Working together to develop an expedited process for additional outdoor restaurant patios this summer.
- Planning for the anticipated reopening of municipal administrative facilities to the public in mid-June.

5. Communications Control Group (CCG)

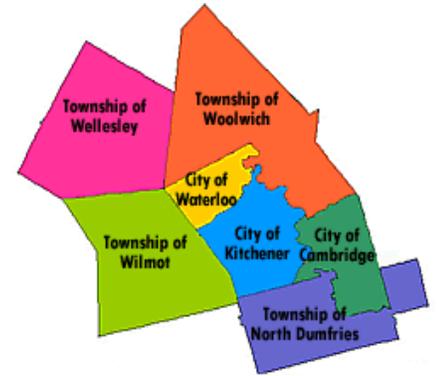
The Communications Control Group (CCG) meets to share relevant information about COVID-19 communications. The group is comprised of communication leaders from public sector organizations across Waterloo Region (hospitals, municipalities, school boards, post-secondary, police, BESTWR, etc.) At the June 3 meeting, the CCG discussed:

- Region's "Here For You" campaign will be launched in July. It will highlight how the Region of Waterloo will continue to provide residents with the municipal programs and services they depend on. Our buildings, service delivery and programming will be adapted to ensure the health and safety of citizens and staff.
- WR Solidarity March for Black Lives Matter – navigating COVID-19 issues related to large gatherings and balancing this with citizens' right to protest.
 - Joint municipal statement of solidarity sent out from heads of Councils on June 2.
- Ask Me Anything initiative – will be launched via Public Health. Potential to expand to other partners. PH will solicit questions from the public and assign "experts" to answer the questions via video – posted weekly.
- 'Stay Safe - Lead the Way' campaign was launched for citizens 70+ living in urban and rural areas who are at risk of isolation, loneliness and frailty, not currently linked to services during COVID-19.
- CCG meetings will now be held every other Monday.

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.

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

Apply now - funding available for charities supporting COVID-19 efforts through Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation and the Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation

Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation and the Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation have approximately \$1 Million available to grant to Waterloo Region charities responding to COVID-19, through funding made available by the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF). Applications opened on May 19 and will be reviewed in partnership with United Way Waterloo Region Communities, with grants distributed on a rolling basis until the end of July. The funds are available to support efforts aimed to assist vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Learn more and apply at www.kwcf.ca/covid19-ecsf or www.cndfoundation.org/covid-19-ecsf.

Apply now – United Way Waterloo Region Communities is now accepting applications for the Emergency Community Support Fund

United Way Waterloo Region Communities (United Way WRC) is now accepting applications for the Emergency Community Support Fund to help charities and qualified donees serve and support vulnerable Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding 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. 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:

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

What types of activities could be funded?

- Community outreach and engagement.
- Developing and/or delivering new programs, services or delivery models as a result of COVID-19.
- Sharing information and knowledge.

- Engaging and recruiting volunteers.

How to apply

Applications will be accepted in two rounds. Round one will be open May 19, 2020 to June 12, 2020 and Round two will be open 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 for assistance.

Friendly Voice

Could you use a friendly chat? The Friendly Voice program is a general wellbeing check-in that 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! Reception hours are 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., but Friendly Voice hours may vary. To print or download the poster for distribution purposes [click here](#).

**If you are in crisis, please call
Here 24/7 1-844-437-3247, or 9-1-1.**

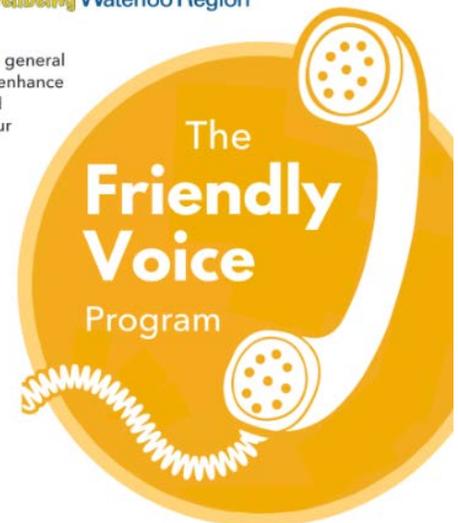


The Friendly Voice is a general wellbeing check-in to enhance social connections and reduce loneliness in our community.

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.

Translated resources

Key COVID-19 information resources and have been published in Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Farsi, French, Somali, Portuguese, Spanish and Tigrinya.

Resources are currently available and posted at: <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#>

Additional multilingual resources are available at www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/COVID19