



# Coordinated COVID-19 Response Newsletter

**June 26, 2020**

The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate the coordinated response to COVID-19 in Waterloo Region. Since we are moving to recovery work, this will be the last in the series to report on the coordinated pandemic response efforts.

## **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](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/COVID19summary). This Dashboard illustrates the trends and is updated Monday to Friday at 10:30 a.m.

#### **Virtual Town Hall for Businesses**

On Thursday, June 25, 2020, Waterloo Region Economic Development co-hosted, with Public Health a virtual town hall meeting with local businesses. Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, shared her desire to engage the business community to understand how businesses are adjusting to COVID-19 public health measures. The town hall participants were asked to reflect on three questions:

- How can we strengthen the adoption of recommended public health measures in business settings, including physical distancing, the wearing of face coverings (non-medical masks), and handwashing by staff and patrons?
- What has worked well and what challenges have you encountered in your efforts to enable these practices among patrons and staff?
- What should staff and Council consider when drafting a face mask by-law?





The participating businesses provided regional staff with valuable insight into questions they were searching for answers to and their experience with implementation of public health measures. Businesses who were unable to participate can still do so. The link to the town hall recording is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8v5qfQrw63w> Any business wanting to provide additional information to the consultation or to ask a question, can do so using the following survey: <https://surveys.regionofwaterloo.ca/?e=201472&h=2EE0D6B930FD876&l=en>

For all businesses who were able to participate in the town hall, thank you for your interest. We value your partnership in helping our community adjust to the new normal.

### **Public Health Measures**

The first wave of COVID-19 is not over. The virus is still active in our community and we know how to stop the spread. We can protect our families, friends and our community by:

- Practicing physical distancing
- Wearing a mask when physical distancing cannot be maintained
- Washing our hands often, covering our coughs in our arm or sleeve, and avoiding touching our faces or fiddling with our masks
- And, staying home when we are not feeling well, even if the symptoms seem minor—get tested and isolate from others including other family members

These Public Health Measures are our new normal and will be in place for a long time to come. Let's stay focused on ensuring we practice them every day!

### **Frequently asked questions**

Review our list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/coronavirus-faqs.aspx>

**Who to contact if you have questions or need additional information:**  
Please email [publichealth@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto: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](http://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.

### Preventing family violence

With many families isolated during COVID-19, it has become even more challenging to address family violence. The Crime Prevention Council of Waterloo Region is leading a prevention initiative with a [social media campaign and resources for support](#).

### Emergency child care

- The Region and emergency child care operators continue to work with families to ensure a smooth transition out of the program on June 26.
- The CSCG would like to thank everyone at the YMCA of Cambridge and Kitchener-Waterloo, Wee Watch and the Region's Children's Centres and Home Child Care program for supporting families over the last few months.

### Food services

Here are the food services totals from March 23 to June 15:

- More than 180,800 community meals were distributed.
- 61,330 prepared meals provided by Bingemans (from March 23 to May 25).
- 21,258 food hampers were distributed to 15 locations throughout Waterloo Region. A food hamper is a 3-4 days' supply of food.
- 1,110,648 pounds of food were distributed.
- 38,179 non-perishable and perishable emergency food hampers were packed at The Food Bank.
- 1,027 food hampers were delivered to community programs and agency partners in Waterloo Region.
- 1,348 hamper deliveries were made to people who are unable to leave their homes due to sickness, mobility issues or self-isolation.



### **Housing and homelessness**

Medical staff completed another 295 COVID assessments, bringing the total to 3,558 and another 61 medical visits, bringing the total to 403.

### **Animal care services**

Another 25 animals received emergency pet food, bringing the total to 432. Five more animals received temporary care due to COVID-19, bringing the total to 49.

### **Psychosocial and spiritual group**

Here 24/7, a central call-in service that connects people to mental health, addiction and crisis services in Waterloo Region and Wellington County, saw calls increase by 30 per cent in the past month. Increased volumes are a result of the impacts of quarantine fatigue, racial unrest, and a fear of re-opening.

[The Friendly Voice program](#) continues general wellbeing check-ins to provide 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 to consider the temporary repurposing of existing road space for active transportation while maintaining physical distancing.

A recent check on 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 approved by Regional Council on June 24, 2020.

### **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](http://www.grt.ca). Summer service changes have now taken effect. 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 until September 30th. 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 website](#) as a fact sheet is available on important steps 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](http://engagewr.ca). We ask that you continue to visit the Region of Waterloo’s [website](#) for any road closure information.

## 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.
- Establishing new protocols for the operation of splash pads in accordance with Provincial directives and best practice.
- Supporting efforts to facilitate rapid patio approvals for food service establishments.
- 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:

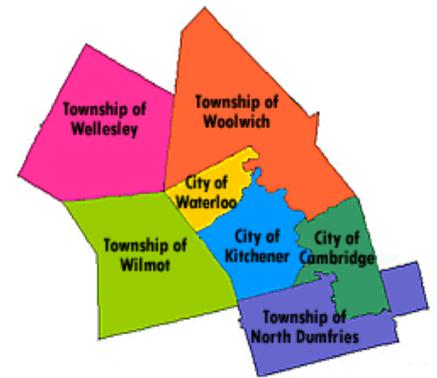
- Public sector organizations are working on public and employee communication and return to work plans. Municipalities are beginning to reopen administrative buildings and some programs and services such as splash pads. Public communication about these details is ongoing.
- Public Health continues to urge residents to wash hands, physically distance, wear masks, etc. as workplaces and businesses reopen.
- Education sector working to determine if, how and when to welcome back students, based on new provincial guidance.
- Local business support ongoing, including initiatives to help small businesses in Waterloo Region.
- Businesses are being consulted about the possibility of mandatory masks.

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](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/CoolingCentres)

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

### 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](mailto:nbird@uwaywrc.ca) or [519-888-6100 ext. 204](tel:519-888-6100).