Grey Bruce Public Health COVID-19 Resources and Information: May 12, 2020

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Tue 12/05/2020 15:20
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As part of our on-going efforts to keep you up-to-date on COVID-19 related information, we are providing resources and links that may be useful for you and your organization.

Please be advised you are receiving this email notification based on previous electronic communications with the Grey Bruce Health Unit and/or our community partners. If you do not wish to receive these communication updates from Grey Bruce Public Health, please email: a.gaviller@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Tuesday, May 12, 2020

Here are links to some recent COVID-19 resources/information you may find useful. Many of these items are available on the GBHU website and may be shared publicly.

Please note: the COVID-19 section of the Grey Bruce Public Health website has been recently updated. It includes general COVID-19 information, inquiries, and resources, information for health care providers, information on the recovery phase, and a message from Dr. Arra Medical Officer of Health

1. Cloth Masks and other Non-Medical Face Coverings in Retail Locations
2. COVID-19 Toes
3. Bottle Drives During COVID-19
4. COVID-19 and Accessing Health Care Services
5. Considerations for the Public on Wearing Face Coverings - Revised
6. GBHU Daily Situation Report
7. OPHA COVID-19 Summary of Key Developments for May 5-6, 2020 (below Social Media links)

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OPHA COVID-19 Key Developments May 12

Provincial Developments

- Premier Doug Ford indicated that he will ask the Ontario Legislature when it resumes this Tuesday for its fourth emergency session to extend the provincial state of emergency until June 2nd.
- The Premier received some criticism when he said that he had two members of his family who do not live with him visiting on Sunday. When asked for his reaction, Dr. Williams emphasised the importance of everyone doing their part to maintain physical distancing and noted that when "the community transmission is down enough, we can look at it [gathering with others from outside the home]."

Summary of Cases in Ontario and Canada

Cases in Ontario

- 20,546 confirmed cases of COVID-19, an increase of 308 cases since yesterday;
  - 57.3% are females;
  - 43% are 60 years and older;
  - 61.8% are from GTA;
  - 16.5% of 3,407 health care workers;
- 74% or 15,131 cases have been resolved;
- 1,027 cases are in hospital of which 194 are in ICU and, of those, 147 are on a ventilator;
- Sadly, there's been 1,669 deaths with 35 deaths since the previous report;
- Long term care homes: 174 active outbreaks; 1,235 deaths among residents; 4 deaths among staff;
- Retirement homes: 71 homes have had outbreak resulting in 163 deaths among residents;
- Lab testing: 19,227 tests were completed on Saturday, 17,618 on Sunday and 13,970 tests completed today; 447,964 tests have been completed with 14,641 are under investigation;
- 3.5% case positivity;
- Dr. David Williams indicated that they will soon start reporting the daily number of community cases.

Cases in Canada

- Total number of people tested: 1,119,026; 1,160 new cases since the last report;
- Confirmed cases: 69,156
- Recovered cases: 32 455 (47%)
- Percent positive: 5.8 %
- Deaths: 4,906 (7%)

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OPHA COVID-19 Key Developments May 9-10

Provincial Developments

Opening Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves:
On Saturday, May 9th, Premier Ford and Environment, Conservation and Parks Minister Yurek announced the opening of provincial parks and conservation reserves for limited use. This means that:

- 520 provincial parks and conservation reserves will be open for day use starting May 11th and another 115 parks and reserves will open on May 15;
- visitors will be welcome to walk, hike, bike and birdwatch but not camp overnight; park amenities will remain closed; and
- access will be free for the rest of the month.

While the Premier encouraged Ontarians to go out and enjoy the outdoors, he expects everyone to do so responsibly, practising physical distancing and other measures to stop the spread of this virus.

**Province Protecting Child Care for Parents When They Return to Work:**

- Education Minister Lecce announced a plan to protect licensed child care to ensure parents retain access to local licensed child care, EarlyON Child and Family Centres when they are able to return to work.
- In recognition that child care centres are not able to charge parents, the plan includes:
  - support for fixed operating costs for eligible child care and EarlyON Centres, with funding delivered through municipalities;
  - a requirement that all child care centres maximize all available government support (e.g. wage and rental subsidies);
  - the waiving of all child care licensing applications, renewals and revision fees to save costs and reduce the administrative requirements; and
  - protecting funding for licensed home child care agencies and providers who have remained active during the emergency closure.
- The Education Minister is also expected to comment this week about what the province plans for the remainder of this school year.

**School Board Employees to Be Voluntarily Redeployed to Congregate Care Settings:**

- The Ontario government has approved an emergency order that would enable school board employees to be voluntarily redeployed to work in congregate care settings (e.g. hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes and women's shelters) during the COVID-19 pandemic. This order would help address the needs of congregate care settings who are short staffed in areas such as custodial and maintenance workers.
- Those who agree to be voluntarily redeployed would maintain their employment relationship with the school board continue to receive their compensation and other employment benefits and also be eligible for the provincial government's pandemic pay and emergency child care.

**Federal Developments**

**Federal Benefit Programs:**

- In Prime Minister Trudeau's Saturday update, he emphasized the various ways the federal government is supporting employers so they can stay in business and keep their employees on the payroll during this crisis.
- He noted that through the Canadian Emergency Business Account more than 500,000 small businesses have been supported with a loan. Both small and larger companies have applied for the wage subsidy such that this program is now supporting some two million employees.
- He also referenced the funding Canada is providing to support global efforts to collaborate on research, testing and the development of treatments and a vaccine.

**The Impact of Reopening the Economy on Seniors:**
The Prime Minister expressed his concern about loosening restrictions too soon, especially in areas where there have been outbreaks in long term care and indicated that he's "very worried", for example about residents of Montreal.

In speaking about the toll that COVID-19 has had on older persons, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Tam, referred it to as "a national tragedy." Her Deputy Chief, Dr. Njoo said, "I'm afraid of more people dying and more outbreaks if restrictions are lifted too soon. While long-term care residents account for only one in five cases, they represent more than 80% of deaths caused by the virus across Canada.

Summary of Cases in Ontario and Canada

Cases in Ontario

- Total confirmed cases: 20,238
- New confirmed cases: 294 (an 1.5% increase)
- Resolved: 14,772 cases
- Total Number of Deaths: 1,634
- Total Tests: 433,994
- Daily tests: 17,618 (14,816 tests under investigation)
- Outbreaks in LTCH: 172 with 2,727 confirmed cases among residents and 1,693 among staff; 1,235 deaths
- Hospitalization: 961 cases of which 195 are intensive care; of those 140 are on a ventilator.

Cases in Canada

- Total Cases in Canada: 66,966
- New Cases: 1,216
- Total Deaths: 4,728 (7%)
- 30,638 of the cases have recovered (47%)
- 26,900 have been tested, on an average daily basis over the past week of 5.8% which
- No new deaths were reported in nine jurisdictions in the past 24 hours; sadly, the majority of deaths (93%) were reported from Quebec and Ontario.

OPHA COVID-19 Key Developments May 8

Provincial Developments

Reopening the Economy:

- With Mother’s Day just around the corner, the Premier made reference to the fact that today, garden centres and nurseries are opening up for in-store payment and purchases, and tomorrow Ontario will see hardware and safety supply stores opening up for in-store payment and purchases as well.
- Monday at 12:01am, Ontario will see thousands more return to work in non-essential retail businesses with a street entrance that can offer curbside pickup and delivery.
- The Premier reminded Ontarians that the Ontario government continues to prepare for the next phase of its Framework for Reopening our Province, which is centred around 3 phases: to protect and support, to restart, and to recover.
- The Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee is working based on the Framework, as well as core public health criteria necessary to move towards reopening. Minister Phillips said he’s "confident we'll soon be in a position to take another significant step."
- As things start to open up, Dr. Williams, the Chief Medical Officer of Health emphasized that the messaging continues to be if you need to go out, "spread out and keep COVID out [of your home and of your life]"
- Businesses working to retool their operations to produce health-related products, or those struggling to operate in this new environment of physical distancing, are reminded they can submit potential roadblocks
though the COVID-19: Tackling the Barriers website.

**Commercial Rent Assistance:**

- The government plans to unveil more details soon about the launch of the new Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program (OCECRA), that will open up next week. This program incorporates contributions from the federal government to subsidise rent by 75% to commercial landlords who would then only collect 25% of the rent from their tenants.
- When faced with questions about a freeze on commercial evictions in the cases where landlords don't want to apply for the program, the government is taking a wait-and-see approach to give the program a chance to get up and running and have a chance to start working.

**Employment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

- Today, Statistics Canada released its monthly job numbers, which showed a 689,200 decrease in employment in Ontario. With a decrease of around 400,000 last month, over a million job losses emphasize how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted Ontario's economy.
- With the death of another staff working in a Long Term Care (LTC) home (bringing the total to 4 deaths), the Premier and Minister Elliott faced many questions about the ability of employees in LTC settings to access N95 masks. The government continues to work with organizations around the flow of PPE particularly as N95 masks are in limited supply.
- The governments of Canada and Ontario are investing $2.25 million in provincially licensed meat processing plants to better protect employees and ensure the continued supply of healthy products for consumers during the COVID-19 outbreak.

**Sports and Recreation:**

- Questions were posed by the media today around the opening of practice facilities for professional athletes, and the Premier cautioned that the same physical distancing rules would apply to sports teams.
- With regards to recreational sports programs, the Premier is heeding the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and reopening will depend on safety. However, the Premier is looking to raise the issue of golf and tennis for starters.

**Travel:**

- Premiers across different provinces (notably Ontario and Quebec) are urging that people stay within their provinces, and are also urging for the Canada-US border to remain closed at this time.

**Looking at the Data:**

- Ontario's Chief Medical Officer, Dr. David Williams, noted that Ontario's cases were higher today than they have been in the past week; he explained that variations are expected and it is the overall downward trend that continues to matter most.
- Increases in testing could also result in more cases being reported depending on the percent positivity, which was 3.5% for May 7th, a change of -0.6% from the previous day. Today's report had the lowest positivity rate compared to the number of tests conducted.
- The transmission rate for the overall province is 0.9% (with variations in some areas as high as 1.3% and some as low as 0.8%), signalling that we are staying steady and the province appears to be in a "slow plateau". Dr. Williams noted that the case numbers aren't coming down as quickly as he'd like to see, but they are moving "in the right direction".
- The province is continuing to focus on testing in LTC and has a goal of reaching 50% by the end of this week.
- The process of obtaining race-based data is still under review for approval, and would be done on a voluntary basis.
Federal Developments

In his daily briefing, Prime Minister Trudeau marked the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day and the end of the Second World War on the continent, reflecting that "Canada has faced challenges before and we've always overcome them. In the face of these tough times, Prime Minister Trudeau made additional announcements to help "kickstart" the gradual reopening of our economy.

Extending Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy:

- Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWB) will be extended beyond June with more details to come next week. The extension of CEWB comes after Statistics Canada revealed that almost two million people lost their jobs in April due to COVID-19. The Prime Minister encouraged businesses to apply for CEWB and "help keep your employees on the payroll".
- CEWB is the first federal aid program during COVID-19 pandemic to receive an extension. When asked about other benefit extensions, Prime Minister Trudeau said that the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) was already planned to last longer than the wage subsidy. Ideally, the CEWB will encourage more employers to re-hire staff and enable Canadians to transition away from receiving the CERB.

Industry Strategy Council, Vulnerable Workers and Gender Gap:

- Prime Minister Trudeau indicated that relief measures for seniors and other sectors (e.g. tourism, energy and aviation) is coming. He acknowledged that some sectors of the economy have been disproportionately affected and said that Innovation, Science and Economic Development Minister Bains will head an Industry Strategy Council that will "take deeper dive into how the pandemic is hurting specific sectors."
- In addition, the Statistics Canada report revealed that vulnerable workers who tend to have part-time or temporary work, or in low-paying jobs have been particularly impacted with heavy job losses amid COVID-19. Moreover, women have also seen larger job losses in March and April. When asked by the media about how the federal government will help disproportionately affected populations such as vulnerable workers, women and young people - Trudeau said that the pandemic has highlighted long standing inequities that need to be addressed.

Summary of Cases in Ontario and Canada

Cases in Ontario

- Total confirmed cases: 19,598
- New confirmed cases: 477
- Percentage change: +2.5% change from yesterday
- Number and percentage of cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases reported to date in Ontario:
  - Male: 8,213 confirmed cases (41.9%)
  - Female: 11,222 confirmed cases (57.3%)
  - Did not specify male or female: 163 confirmed cases (0.8%)
  - Age 60+: 8,508 confirmed cases (43.4%)
  - Health care worker: 3,230 confirmed cases (16.5%)
  - Outbreaks in LTCH: 234
  - Outbreaks in Retirement homes: 83
  - Outbreaks in Hospitals: 70
  - Deaths: 1,540 cases
  - Intensive care: 560 cases
  - Hospitalization: 2,428 cases

Cases in Canada

- Total Cases in Canada: 65,399 cases
- Total Deaths: 4,471 deaths
- 45% of the cases have recovered
- Over 1 million people have been tested, of which 6% have tested positive
- 25,100 people have been tested on an average daily basis over the past week

We understand the challenges everyone is facing during this difficult time, and we will continue to communicate and work together to keep our communities safe.

Sent on behalf of the Grey Bruce Health Unit.

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Vision: A healthier future for all.
Mission: Working with Grey Bruce communities to protect and promote health.
Core Values: Effective communication, Partnership, Respectful Relationships, Quality and Innovation, Integrity, Leadership

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