

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
March 13, 2020 at 5 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

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- Good afternoon and welcome everyone. Before I begin, I want to thank the members of our media for coming together once again. As I have said before, I sincerely appreciate your help in sharing these important, time sensitive messages with our public.
 - I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our City Manager, Chris Murray, my colleague Chief Pegg, and our City colleagues joining me here to share an update on our new recommendations as part of our COVID-19 response in Toronto.
 - Yesterday, Ontario's Minister of Education announced an order closing publicly-funded schools.
 - Earlier today, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health recommended the immediate suspension of all large events and public gatherings of over 250 people. In discussions with the province, I can advise that this does not include the use of public transit.
 - The Chief Medical Officer of Health also recommended the deferral of nonessential travel outside of Canada.
 - In addition to these new provincial guidelines, today I am making further recommendations because of our local situation, to help protect Toronto residents, workers and visitors from COVID-19.
 - The measures I am recommending will be effective by 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, March 14 and in place until April 5. They include:
 - The closure of all licensed childcare centres
 - The cancellation of March Break camps; and

--Enhanced measures for travelers

- In particular, anyone who has travelled anywhere, outside of Canada, should self-isolate and avoid contact with others for 14 days.
- I am making these recommendations based on the available science and evidence, and in consideration of our local circumstances.
- Specifically, I'm making these recommendations for the following reasons:
 - We know that for COVID-19, children often have little or no signs or symptoms of infection;
 - We have seen an escalation in the number of travel-related cases of COVID-19 here in our city;
 - We need to reduce the risk of undetected spread of COVID-19 in people's households;
 - And, most importantly, we need to mitigate the impact of this virus and help protect the health of our residents.
- I recognize that these recommendations will result in significant adjustments to your regular routines, and they may present challenges for many families and our broader community.
- Please know that I am not making these recommendations lightly. On the contrary, they are being made after careful and measured consideration. I am calling on the public, my colleagues here at the City and my staff in Toronto Public Health to rise to this challenge as I believe we can together delay the spread of this virus and work well together as we have done so far to date in our COVID-19 response.
- As I have committed to you previously, I will continue to keep you updated as new facts and new information are confirmed. In the meantime, I encourage you to stay informed by visiting our website, www.toronto.ca/coronavirus, where you can get the latest information about this evolving situation.
- With that, I will now turn it over to the City Manager.