

**Update on COVID-19**

**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**

**March 26, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.**

**Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- As of 1 p.m. today there are 339 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Toronto, this is up 31 from yesterday. There are 22 cases hospitalized, 10 in ICU and unfortunately there have been 4 deaths. Approximately 25% are attributed to community spread and 13 people have recovered. These numbers are constantly changing.
- Currently there are 10 long-term care homes, 1 retirement home, 17 chronic care/rehab hospitals and 3 reactivation care centres in Toronto with at least one staff or resident with COVID-19.
- I have also been asked what constitutes an outbreak in a long-term care home. In this setting, a COVID-19 outbreak is declared when there are 2 or more cases of infection in the facility. Currently there are 3 outbreaks in these Toronto facilities.
- The spread of COVID-19 in a long-term care home setting is especially concerning because we know that these residents are vulnerable to infection and tend to be older residents. Many of these people have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions.
- Part of our core work in public health is working with long-term care homes to ensure proper measures are in place to prevent disease spread, including:
  - Confirmed COVID-19 cases are isolated
  - Enhanced cleaning
  - No visitors are allowed and staff are screened at entry
  - Those caring for residents use personal protective equipment
  - Enhanced surveillance and monitoring for illness among staff and residents
- We continue to see COVID-19 cases in our community that have affected our most vulnerable residents. This is why we have increased our physical distancing actions.

## Public Health

- Other jurisdictions have needed to use stronger social distancing measures to prevent further virus spread. Some examples include:
  - In Nova Scotia police have the power to fine people up to \$1,000 for not practicing social distancing.
  - In Montreal they have banned group gatherings of two or more people with police issuing \$1,000 fines for non-compliance.
  - The City of Vancouver is fining businesses up to \$50,000 if customers are not kept at least two metres apart. Individuals could be fined up to \$1,000.
  - And some European cities have enacted restrictions on leaving the house, except for a weekly outing to buy groceries and other essential supplies.
- Decisions to implement these measures are based on evidence as well as many factors and considerations including: increasing COVID-19 cases and deaths, the extent to which the public is following requirements with social distancing, and ensuring that our healthcare resources are protected and available.
- In Canada, community means a lot to us, and we are very fortunate to have many civil liberties and freedoms. We look out and take care for our community, and sometimes put others before our own individual needs. This is at the core of what it means to be a Torontonian and a Canadian.
- It is precisely why we have to implement social, or physical, distancing measures to protect our community at this critical juncture.
- If people do not follow these protective measures, then stronger ones affecting our civil liberties will be put in place to protect our city.
- Everyone has a critical role in the direction we go from here. Thank you to those who are protecting our city by staying home and practising physical distancing. This is the most effective way to prevent this virus from spreading. Your families, loved ones, friends and neighbours are depending on you to do the right thing.
- Please continue this very responsible action to stay home, stay safe and take care of each other.