

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
April 17, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- As of 12:30 p.m. today there are 3,145 cases of COVID-19 in Toronto. This includes 2,818 confirmed cases and 327 probable ones. There are 244 cases hospitalized, and there are 97 in intensive care units. In total I am sad to report that 154 people have now died of COVID-19 in our community and on behalf of my team, I extend our sincerest condolences to all of those affected. I wish a speedy recovery to all those who are ill.
- The province's plan to expand COVID-19 testing is now underway, and while this is good news, we can expect that our confirmed COVID-19 case numbers will continue to increase. While this may be jarring, or disheartening, please remember that the more information we have about COVID-19 in our city and in vulnerable settings like long-term care homes and shelters, the better we are equipped to respond.
- Data is core to informing our response to COVID-19. It is the only way we will understand where and how this new virus is spreading, and if our public health measures are working.
- Our data story is being informed by case and contact tracing reports, testing results, reported symptoms, hospitalizations, deaths, and experiences in other jurisdictions. It is important to understand that in order to identify data patterns and trends, we need good data from many different sources over time.
- So, what is emerging as Toronto's COVID-19 data story:
 - To-date approximately 23% of our local COVID-19 cases have been among residents over the age of 80 years.
 - While the eldest members of our community are most impacted by COVID-19, younger people are also affected.
 - In fact an estimated 35% of those who have been hospitalized for COVID-19 are aged 40-59 years, residents of our city who are in the prime of their life.

--A further observation that we have made is that approximately 35% of COVID-19 infections in Toronto are the result of being a close contact of a confirmed case. This trend continues and underscores the need for strict self-isolation of everyone who is ill and their close contacts.

- A particular area of concern is the outbreaks we are experiencing in our long-term care and retirement homes. Like you, I am very concerned about the devastating impact of COVID-19 that we are seeing among some of our most vulnerable residents.
- As I mentioned at yesterday's briefing, I appreciate your interest and need for more information about how COVID-19 spreads and how it is impacting our city and our loved ones. Today, I am pleased to let you know that we have posted data online about outbreaks in local long-term care homes and retirement homes. We will be updating this information every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- Staff are working tirelessly to keep our loved ones safe in long-term care and retirement homes. In addition to the measures already in place, new provincial measures including increased testing of staff and residents, and restrictions for staff to only work in only one facility will help reduce the risk of infection.
- The other congregate setting that is of great concern for us is Toronto's shelter services community. Today my team is posting aggregate data regarding shelters and will post a more detailed analysis on Monday.
- Staff in these settings are also working diligently to ensure good physical distancing, expand shelter capacity, screen clients as they enter the facility, reinforce good hand hygiene, and increase cleaning of high-touch surfaces. The availability of more shelter facilities and recovery centres is very important to keeping infections down and help those impacted by COVID-19 to recover safely.
- Before closing, I would like to take a moment to address a recent concern shared by taxi drivers in our city, who are essential workers. They are worried about being exposed to COVID-19 from infected riders who are travelling to and from hospitals or COVID-19 assessment centres.



Public Health

- For anyone who is infected with COVID-19 and self-isolating, I will remind you, the only reason you should be leaving home is to go to a scheduled healthcare appointment or to hospital. If you must do this:
 - Do not use public transportation and where possible, it is best if you drive yourself.
 - If driving yourself is not possible, arrange a ride with a friend or family member.
 - If you are unable to arrange a ride, take a taxi or car service. In either case ensure the windows of the car are open, sit in the back seat and wear a mask, scarf or face covering over your nose and mouth. If you are travelling by taxi or car service, record the company name and license plate.
 - If you need urgent medical attention, call 911.
- In closing, thank you for your interest in understanding how COVID-19 is impacting our city. We will continue to do our very best to share information as it becomes available. In the meantime, remember the most important thing you can do is to continue to stay home, stay safe and take care of each other.

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