

June 18, 2020

**Statement from Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health, on 1,000 COVID-19 deaths in Toronto:**

Today, I am very saddened to report that we reached a tragic milestone of 1,000 lives lost to COVID-19, a virus that was unknown to us just 6 months ago. This is an immeasurable loss experienced by so many people across our city and beyond. On behalf of everyone at Toronto Public Health, we offer our sincerest condolences to everyone who has lost a friend, family member or loved one to COVID-19.

It is so important for us to take a moment, to look beyond these numbers and remember that each death represents a unique life. An individual with a personal story, who had an impact on us and our community. One thousand people have died from COVID-19 and have left behind friends, family members and neighbours. These losses are deeply personal for those who knew and loved them. This is made even more difficult because our current circumstances limit our ability to comfort one another in person.

Your commitment to our public health measures has helped our community to avoid what could have been much worse. However, COVID-19 has resulted in a significant number of deaths and loss in our community. To put this number in context, in 2003, we lost 44 people to SARS in the Greater Toronto Area. Each year we lose approximately 1,000 people to heart attacks and related cardiovascular disease in our city. Sadly, given that the virus is still circulating and there is no effective treatment or vaccine, we should anticipate that we will continue to see deaths from COVID-19 in our community.

We have already lost too many people to COVID-19 and we must do everything we can reasonably do to prevent any more deaths. As we continue to move towards reopening our city, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to remember that our battle against COVID-19 is not over yet. We must all continue to take public health measures seriously to prevent further loss of life and protect the most vulnerable residents in our city.

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**Media contact:** Lenore Bromley, Toronto Public Health, 416-338-7974,  
Lenore.Bromley@toronto.ca