

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
July 2, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory and good afternoon. Today there are 77 new COVID-19 infections in Toronto. To date, 12,574 people have recovered, an increase of 71 since yesterday. I continue to be encouraged by the steady decrease in our cases in our city. This is a direct result of our collective hard work. As always, for more data on the status of COVID-19 cases in our city, I encourage you to visit our website.
- Earlier today we held our third virtual Board of Health meeting where I provided an update on our COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. As part of this presentation, I shared some updates to our interactive map of COVID-19 cases by neighbourhood and high-level socio-demographic data that indicate that some areas of Toronto have higher rates of COVID-19 than others. This includes some areas in the northwest corner of our city. However, it is important to note that every single area of our city has been impacted by COVID-19.
- The map is a useful tool to inform our strategy to protect your health, and helps us to determine when and where we need to adjust our actions as we continue safely reopening our city. My presentation is now available on our website.
- My update to our Board also included findings from a review of how social determinants of health seem to be affecting COVID-19 infection and outcomes. Specifically, our analysis found that:
 - Areas in the city with the lowest income levels reported higher COVID-19 infections and more hospitalizations compared to areas with the highest income levels.
 - Areas in the city with the highest percentage of newcomers reported higher COVID-19 infections; and

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--Areas in the city with the highest percent of people living in over-crowded housing reported higher COVID-19 infections. This is not surprising as we know the virus spreads through close contact with someone who is infected.

- My team will use these findings to track COVID-19 trends across our city, and inform future public health actions and community engagement to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in Toronto.
- I also provided an update to the Board on our COVID-19 monitoring dashboard which shows that our overall status continues to be yellow, with two of four categories of indicators showing a green status and two showing a yellow status.
- There has been an increase in the acute care bed occupancy rates, prompting us to change this particular indicator to red, and the overall Health System Capacity category to yellow. This is not surprising, given that hospitals are now ramping up activity and taking on elective procedures. We will continue to monitor this category of indicators along with our health care partners.
- A very slight uptick in new cases at the end of June has led us to keep our new cases of COVID-19 indicator at yellow. However, we are continuing to see a general decline in new COVID-19 case counts, and this is good news.
- As the outbreak continues, we will see fluctuations like these from time to time. It is important to remember that at this point in our outbreak story, it is more valuable to focus on the general trends and patterns, including new hospitalizations, and not necessarily daily changes which are less significant at this point.
- As a result, next week we will be moving to update our COVID-19 dashboard and daily case press numbers three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. This will allow my team the time they need to focus on digging deeper into our data which is important to help us better understand COVID-19 trends as we move through the outbreak and prepare for a potential future wave in the fall.

Public Health

- It is now just over a week since we moved into stage 2 of reopening. Since this time, I have certainly noticed more smiles and an increase in energy in our city as more people move around the city. Entering this stage is a significant milestone for us and it took a great deal of work and sacrifice for us to get to this point.
- But while our COVID-19 case numbers have decreased, the virus continues to circulate in our city. We are still living with COVID-19, so please continue to be careful.
- We must not take the progress we've made for granted. We need to keep moving forward with care. For this reason, on June 30, I asked City Council to require masks or face coverings in all enclosed public places. I was very pleased that City Council voted unanimously in favour of this requirement which will be in effect as of July 7. This action will help us to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect our health. Remember I wear my mask to protect you and you wear yours to protect me.
- Since the start of this pandemic I have asked you to take care of each other. With this in mind, as you get outside to enjoy the fresh air and nice weather, please continue to keep your distance from others outside of your social circle. Please keep washing your hands and please keep taking care of each other by wearing your cloth mask or face covering when you are in enclosed public settings.

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