

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**July 15, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.**  
**Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.**

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- Thank you Mayor Tory and good afternoon. Over the past two days, there have been 59 new COVID-19 infections in Toronto. I'm pleased to share that the increase of 14 cases reported yesterday was the smallest number of new cases in quite some time. This shows that we continue to move in the right direction. In addition, to date, 13,259 people have recovered, an increase of 111 since Monday.
  
- Turning to our COVID-19 dashboard, our status remains at yellow with two of our indicator categories being yellow and the other two being green. Our numbers on hospitalizations and outbreaks continue to move in the right direction. I'm also pleased to share that the percentage of laboratory tests positive for COVID continues to go down. Overall, our local COVID-19 cases continue to decline, but it is a slow decline. This tells us we need to be vigilant in our measures to make sure we continue to see lower COVID-19 activity in our city.
  
- Data is key to our COVID-19 response, informing our actions, and fighting this virus. We monitor our local data carefully and analyze what is happening in our city, to understand data trends and to guide our actions now and for the future. At the very beginning of this outbreak I committed to sharing as much information as possible directly with you. This transparency is critical to help people to understand our local data story and to stay informed on how this virus is evolving in our city. Data helps us to see who is at potential risk and how we can protect them, which is key to combatting this virus.
  
- My team has been a leader in our data collection, analysis and information sharing. As I have shared before, it has been an incredible and very challenging journey for us as an organization. We have worked non-stop since the beginning of this year on our response and my team's commitment is nothing short of remarkable.

- We have been keeping you informed through these media briefings, our daily reports, our COVID-19 monitoring dashboard, our reports on area-based data analysis, and the open data portal release that we launched last week and will be updated again today, to name just a few of our efforts.
- As previously noted, to allow our team time to more deeply analyze our data to inform our response – especially for the upcoming flu and respiratory virus season – we will continue providing a comprehensive data update on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. For those who are interested in the day-to-day COVID-19 case counts, we are sharing some tracking numbers through a daily afternoon update on Twitter @TOPublicHealth.
- Work is also underway on a deeper data analysis to help us understand patterns and trends and what has changed over the course of this pandemic in our city. This is why we are working on an updated analysis of how COVID-19 has affected different populations according to factors such as race and household income. We look forward to sharing an update on this work soon.
- Some examples of how we use data to inform our decisions include:
  - Sharing data to inform testing for people experiencing homelessness;
  - Sharing information with our health system partners to inform where mobile testing clinics would be most valuable;
  - Creating guidance documents for local businesses and community services to safely operate given what we know about virus spread;
  - Providing public health guidance to school boards as they prepare for reopening in September; and
  - Informing our public health messages on how to stay safe and protect each other as the pandemic evolves.
- One of the questions we have been trying to answer through our data analysis is whether there are any risk factors for severe outcomes related to COVID-19. Since the beginning of the outbreak in our community, approximately 12% of cases have been hospitalized, 4% have been in intensive care units and 3% have been intubated. We found that in Toronto, severely ill cases were more

likely to be males over age 60, and to have pre-existing medical conditions, most prominently cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

- Our analysis suggests that the risk profile of those who have severe COVID-19 illness in Toronto is consistent with what is reported in Ontario and more broadly. It's important for us to understand risk factors that lead to more severe outcomes so that we can all take steps to appropriately protect ourselves and our loved ones.
- As our city continues to move forward with reopening we need to continue being careful and vigilant so we can safely move into Stage 3. We have all worked so hard and we will need to stay focused to do our best to prevent increased COVID-19 activity as our city opens up more.
- We are fortunate in Toronto to be able to learn from the experiences of other cities and countries who are ahead of us in their outbreak as they reopen their businesses and communities. One clear and important observation is that many places have noted increases in COVID-19 activity as more people gather in public settings.
- Specifically, surges in COVID-19 activity are being linked to settings like bars where people are congregating and consuming alcohol and are less careful about following public health measures. This is happening in cities throughout Canada and around the world. If we want to keep our cases down in our city, we need to be careful and learn from these experiences, and to continue following our public health and physical distancing measures.
- Overall, as mentioned earlier this week by Premier Ford, we remain in Stage 2 in Toronto. I know we are all looking forward to moving to Stage 3. However, for now, I believe that we are at the right place for our city given our current circumstances. In the meantime, we continue to prepare, based on the experiences of other jurisdictions that have reopened ahead of us so when we do move to the next stage, we know we can do so safely.
- Finally, I am pleased to announce that our provincial colleagues are hosting a community pop-up testing site in the Black Creek area of our city on Saturday,



## Public Health

July 18. The site will be located at the Christian Centre Church at 4545 Jane Street and will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thank you to our colleagues at Ontario Health for this important initiative.

- In closing, I ask once again that you help our city to keep moving forward. We all have a role to play and I ask that at this time we all continue to follow the 4 Ws: wash your hands, watch your distance, wear your masks, and keep working together to get our city back.

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