

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
April 19, 2021 at 2 p.m.
Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

- Thank you Mayor Tory, and good afternoon.
- Today I am reporting 1,477 cases of COVID-19 – since last Thursday we have reported 6,976 cases.
- There are 65 new hospitalizations to report, bringing the number of people in hospital to 881.
- 184 of them are in ICU.
- I am sorry to report the loss of six more lives to COVID-19.
- Good news is in short supply these days so I'm happy that as you heard from the Mayor, mobile clinics over the weekend made a huge difference in the delivery of close to 5,500 vaccinations.
- Community leadership is an essential driver of those accomplishments, over the weekend and going forward.
- Those community driven clinics and community driven awareness are vital to getting needles in arms and to addressing hesitancy.
- That's the extent of the good news, because the factors limiting it are many and threatening.
- To meet the threats, we need to do four key things.
- There is no question we need to acquire as much vaccine as we can get our hands on.

- But at this moment – most importantly – we need to double down on public health measures to disrupt transmission.
- We then need as individuals to do everything we can to act in ways that support results from those measures.
- And finally, while we manage what supply we have at present, we need to target carefully and wisely and for maximum effect.
- Prioritizing vaccine delivery is the most efficient way to bring the spread under control in the places and populations where it is highest and most threatening.
- Last week, the chair of the Province’s science advisory table said that it would take 59 vaccinations on a per capita basis to prevent one new case of COVID-19.
- A per capita basis is the broad based approach to vaccine delivery.
- But 36 targeted vaccinations – vaccinations delivered in hot spots where infections are high, where risk of infection is high, and where there are concentrations of front line and essential workers – just 36 targeted vaccines would prevent a new case of COVID-19.
- Mobile clinics and focus on hot spots reaches those targets and delivers that advantage.
- If we limit the spread there, we limit the spread everywhere.
- Doing that will make a difference to every person who lives in Toronto.
- The Premier is right when he says that we need more vaccines – for Toronto, for the GTHA, for the province.
- We also need provisions to allow people to stay apart if they’re ill – this includes paid sick days – even on a temporary emergency basis, so that people can afford to stay home if they’re sick. The science supports this.

- As well we need measures that will meaningfully limit transmission to make it harder for the virus to spread.
- This includes the capacity to swiftly and decisively act to make sure essential workplaces are safe places to work and aren't facilitating spread.
- There are significant, ongoing discussions across the health sector to provide the Province with advice on what more must be done to turn back this dangerous and surging-level of transmission.
- The extent of the threat suggests the spread of the virus is not solved locally. I am amongst many peers who see the circumstances demanding a province-wide strategy.
- The variants have demonstrated they are effective at being relentless. While they took a little longer to reach exponential growth than predicted, they have done exactly as expected.
- On February 8th I said to you: "Today, we are in a transition from one pandemic to another. A transition to a new pandemic."
- On February 17th I said: "I have never been as worried about the future as I am today."
- It's obvious now we are well into the worst part of the pandemic so far and there are steps yet to take to get through it, to get past it and put it behind us.