

Joint statement from The Regional Municipality of York, Mackenzie Health, Oak Valley Health and Southlake Regional Health Centre on COVID-19

York Region continues to reach significant vaccination milestones, including administering more than 1.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. With over 85% of eligible York Region residents age 12+ have been vaccinated with their first COVID-19 vaccine and more than 80% of eligible York Region residents have received two doses.

However, now, more than ever before, we must continue to work together and be vigilant.

Unvaccinated individuals are prolonging the pandemic and are the driving force behind the increase in cases and hospitalizations across all four York Region hospitals. Over the past several months, the vast majority of COVID-19 patient hospitalizations were among those unvaccinated or partially vaccinated. In the same time, the incidence (number of new cases per 100,000 population) of COVID-19 is 12.1 times higher among York Region residents who are unvaccinated compared to those who have two doses of vaccine. Vaccines are the most effective protection against serious illness, hospitalizations and death from COVID-19.

Hospital staff, public health staff, our health and community partners and volunteers are doing everything they can to continue providing exceptional care to patients and their families, but the increasing pressure from the fourth wave is taking a toll.

In addition, when hospital admissions from COVID-19 increase, it puts significant pressure on the health-care system to care for other patients who need surgery and other urgent and emergency care. It is also too early to know what impact the annual cold and flu season may have in our communities this fall and winter.

We know COVID-19, especially the Delta variant, can spread quickly amongst individuals. As we enter the fall season plus return to in-person learning and the likelihood of more indoor gatherings, we expect an increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases. Ensuring you and your eligible family members born in 2009 or earlier are vaccinated with two doses of COVID-19 vaccine will help protect those who cannot receive a vaccine and those who may not achieve strong protection from immunization due to underlying health conditions, such as severe immunosuppression.

Even after vaccination we must continue to follow public health measures to keep everyone safe and healthy, ensure any social gatherings stay within current capacity limits, stay home if you don't feel well, practice physical distancing, wear a mask when required and wash your hands frequently.

We all want this pandemic behind us, but to defeat this virus we must continue to take collective action.

If you are already vaccinated – thank you. If you still need to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, we urge all eligible individuals to do it as soon as possible.

Please visit york.ca/COVID19VaccineInfo for more information on York Region's COVID-19 vaccination program, including a list of clinic locations, dates and times.



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