

December 8th, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Planning and Actions

At this meeting, the Health Coordination Table focused on the following key information and actions to enable Ontario's health care system to effectively respond to COVID-19:

- **Updated modelling projects the continued increase of COVID-19 case rates and ICU rates.**
 - The Science Advisory Table presented COVID-19 modelling that projected the continued upward trend of case rates and ICU occupancy, amid the maintenance of current public health measures.
 - The immediate increase of case rates was attributed to the Delta variant, but the Science Advisory Table acknowledged that Omicron will likely overtake Delta as the dominant variant in Ontario by the end of 2021.
- **Preparing for winter by building upon the province's comprehensive testing strategy.**
 - The Chief Medical Officer of Health shared a preview of response efforts for the upcoming season, emphasizing the importance of following the most up to date public health guidelines amid emerging variants.
 - The Ministry of Health outlined its testing approach for winter, with an aim to provide quick, convenient access to evidence-based testing when and where it is needed.
 - These efforts will consist of expanded access to testing through pharmacies, expanded access to low barrier testing options for elementary and secondary school students and introduction of holiday pop-up testing.
 - The ministry also outlined plans to increase access to testing and improve testing turn-around times in Northern Ontario, including the expansion of rapid point-of-care molecular testing.
- **Vaccination efforts continue through the winter COVID-19 vaccination strategy and Universal Influenza Immunization Program**
 - The Ministry of Health provided an update on the province's winter COVID-19 vaccination strategy, including the vaccination of 5-11 year-olds, the distribution of third dose boosters and efforts to reach the remaining unvaccinated population.

- The ministry also presented an overview of the 2021/2022 Universal Influenza Immunization Program, which began in September by targeting hospitals, long-term care homes and high-risk individuals and eventually expanded eligibility to the general population in November.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

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Deputy Minister
Ministry of Health

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Ministry of Health

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