



## MEDIA RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, February 23, 2021, Peterborough

# First Case of COVID-19 Variant of Concern Reported in Peterborough Region

## *Residents Urged to Maintain Vigilance with Public Health Measures*

Peterborough Public Health has confirmed a local resident tested positive for COVID-19 variant of concern (VOC) B.1.1.7, also known as the variant first detected in the United Kingdom.

“With this confirmation of a variant of concern, following public health measures has never been more important as VOCs have a higher rate of transmissibility than the dominant COVID-19 strain,” said Dr. Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health. “Now it’s a race against time to try and immunize our most vulnerable populations while containing the spread of further cases. This is where we need everyone’s help.”

The case is a male in his 20s who works from home and is self-isolating. Contact tracing is underway, and it appears his exposure was from a roommate who was identified as a high-risk contact of another VOC case from another region. This roommate has since left the Peterborough area. There is one other high-risk contact connected to this household who tested negative, and this individual will be retested again on Day 10 post-exposure.

Even though the Peterborough region is designed Yellow according to the provincial COVID-19 framework, Dr. Salvaterra urged local residents to avoid all non-essential travel, don’t invite visitors into your home, stay two metres distant from others, wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, and get tested if you have even one symptom.

“The good news is that the vaccines in use are effective against the known variant strains,” explained Dr. Salvaterra. “But we are still a long way away from having all our vulnerable populations protected. We are working very hard to ramp up our local immunization roll out as supplies allow, so we are counting on the community’s support so we can avoid the exponential spread of the virus as seen in other areas of the world.”

Peterborough Public Health now reports variants of concern on its website. More information on variants of concern can be found there at [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca).

### **For further information, please contact:**

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