



IMPORTANT NOTICE

PLEASE READ

Date: December 16, 2021

From: COVID-19 Task Team and HFN Council

Re: COVID-19 Update # 26 – Implementation of Public Health and Hiawatha COVID-19 Health and Safety Measures

Aanii Hiawatha Citizens,

Evidence of Community spread of the highly transmissible Omicron variant and new COVID-19 cases are expected to rapidly increase in the coming days. In other parts of the world, such as the United Kingdom (UK), where Omicron is now the dominant strain, cases were doubling every three days. The evidence shows that transmission of Omicron is over 3.3, compared to 1.27, for all other variants combined. This means that one person with Omicron could potentially infect several people, whereas with other variants, such as Delta, one person could potentially infect up to three other people.

As proven in South Africa and the UK, Canada will also experience a massive wave (our 5th wave) due to the high transmission rate of Omicron. The only way to get ahead of this wave and flatten the curve, sooner than later, is to implement guidelines to mitigate the risk of transmissions as quickly as possible.

The science modelling to date has shown that Omicron isn't like anything that has been seen to date in this pandemic yet. What has been scientifically proven to combat transmission, severe illness and death is vaccination, mask wearing, and physical distancing, along with other measures.

Several Canadian provinces, including Ontario, along with other measures that are being put into place, are accelerating campaigns for the third vaccine, as well as, first and second doses. Emerging evidence has shown that Omicron can evade the protection of current vaccines at rates greater than previous variants, with the third vaccine (booster) offering stronger protection against the Omicron variant.

Given the evidence to date, Ontario and Peterborough Public Health (PPH) have put the following safety measures in place to reduce the risk of transmissions and to once again, flatten the curve as quickly as possible.

ONTARIO UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Effective December 18, 2021** at 12:01 a.m. Ontario intends to introduce a 50 per cent capacity limit to the following indoor areas of venues with a usual capacity of 1,000.
- **Effective December 20, 2021**, requiring proof of vaccination for youth aged 12 to 17 years participating in organized sports at recreational facilities.
- Individuals aged 18 and over will be eligible to schedule their booster dose appointment through the [COVID-19 vaccination portal](#), by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre, or through Indigenous-led vaccination clinics, select pharmacies and primary care settings. Appointments will be booked for approximately three months after a second dose.
- **Effective January 4, 2022**, requiring the use of the enhanced vaccine certificate with QR code and the Verify Ontario app in settings where proof of vaccination is required. The QR code can be used digitally or by printing a paper copy. Individuals can download their enhanced certificate with QR code by visiting <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>
- Strengthening the verification process for medical exemptions. Organizations and businesses that are under the provincial proof-of-vaccination system will be advised to no longer accept physician notes as of **January 10, 2022**.
- Strongly advise People to limit social gatherings and the number of gatherings attended over the holiday season. Additional precautions should be taken if all individuals are not fully vaccinated or where vaccination status is unknown.
- Employers in all industries are being advised to make every effort to allow employees to work from home.
- Delaying the lifting the proof of vaccination requirements beyond **January 17, 2022**.
- Current capacity limits will remain in place for food or drink establishments.

Long-Term Care Homes:

- Effective immediately, all general visitors to a long-term care home will need to be fully vaccinated to enter. In addition, all long-term care homes to increase infection prevention and control, including the testing of all staff, students, volunteers, and caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, at least twice a week prior to entry into the home as part of enhanced active screening practices. Requiring a negative test upon entry to a long-term care home for all visitors and support workers who provide essential services to a resident or to the facility, unless they had a negative test the day before. Requiring caregivers to be fully vaccinated, unless they have a valid medical exemption or are attending to a resident in a palliative end-of-life situation. Caregivers will be required to have a first dose by **December 20, 2021** and all required doses to be considered fully vaccinated by **February 21, 2022**.

Retirement Homes:

- **Effective December 22, 2021** Retirement Homes are requiring rapid antigen testing for staff, volunteers, contractors and essential caregivers, regardless of vaccination status, two times per week prior to entry into the home as part of enhanced active screening practices. Requiring rapid antigen testing for general visitors and support workers entering a retirement home, regardless of vaccination status.

The above noted measures are just highlights, if you require further information on Ontario's measures please visit <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>

PETERBOROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH (PPH) UPDATE HIGHLIGHTS:

Work Places (Effectively Immediately):

- All workplaces (non-essential staff) are required to work from home, unless staff are required to be onsite, physical distancing must be maintained at all times, between all staff.
- Holiday parties cannot take place at the workplace, but must take place at a meeting or event space where Proof of Vaccination status is verified and other Public Health measures are in place.
- Continue to abiding by general requirements (i.e., review/update safety plans, continue active screening of employees, etc).

Restaurants, Bars and Meeting and Event Spaces (Effective Immediately):

- Ensure that the maximum number of patrons seated at each table does not exceed ten (10) people.
- Arrange the premises to ensure that patrons seated at separate tables are distanced by at least two (2) metres, or separated by an impermeable barrier.
- Allow patrons to consume food and/or beverage only while seated.
- If buffet-style food service is used, only one table of patrons should be permitted to access the buffet at any given time and patrons must wear their mask at all times when accessing the buffet.
- Advise patrons to wear tightly-fitting mask when not actively eating or drinking. This includes socializing at table and moving around.
- Ensure that all serving staff (including waitstaff and bartenders) are provided with, and wear, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when in close proximity to patrons who are eating and/or drinking. PPE will require a medical-grade, tightly fitting face mask and eye protection, such as a face shield or safety glasses.

The above noted measures are just highlights, if you require further information on Peterborough Public Health's measure's please visit <https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/>

It is once again time for us to also double down on our efforts to keep our Community and Citizens, and greater Communities, safe and healthy. The measures Hiawatha is taking is intended to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, especially now that the Omicron variant is circulating in the Peterborough Public Health area.

Along with Ontario and PPH's measures that are in place, Hiawatha also has the following measures in place to mitigate risks of transmission.

HIAWATHA UPDATE (Effective Immediately):

LIFE Services Centre Offices (Closed for January 2022):

- LIFE Centre will be closed, if you require a meeting with a Staff person, or to receive a rapid antigen test, please call 705-295-4421 to book an appointment.
- Staff (non-essential) will work from the office and home as required.

- LIFE Services Centre will strictly follow the safety measures laid out in the organization's safety plans.

Child Care Centre (Open for January 2022):

- The Child Care centre will remain open at this time, however please note that changes may occur at any time based on direction from the Ministry.

Fitness Facility (Open):

- The fitness facility will be open for limited hours and appointments must be scheduled with CHR, Lynn Wilford.
- Only 4 people at a time will be allowed in the Facility.

Gathering Place (Closed):

- The Gathering Place will remain closed for the month of January 2022.

Foot Care/Massages:

- Appointments for foot care and massages will still be available.

Programming:

- Programming through the month of January 2022 will transition to an online activity/event. Porch drop offs and/or pick ups of supplies will continue. Please watch for further updated details in the January 2022 Newsletter.

ORRS Store/Gas Bar: (Open)

- Enhanced PPE will be in place for ALL Staff with the use of N 95 or surgical masks and safety glasses, unless Staff are working behind a glass barrier
- Safety glasses are not mandated for Gas Attendants but distance of 6ft must be maintained
- Capacity limits will be in place, two people at the gas till end and 3 in/at the store till end.
- Please follow enter/exit signs.
- **Effective Immediately, masks are mandatory for all customers, no exceptions.**
For those who are unable to wear a mask, or who do not want to come into the store to pay for their gas, a portable debit machine will be available by the end of next week (December 24, 2021).

ORRS Restaurant (Open):

- Barriers between tables are back in place, only 4 diners per table, masks must be worn at all times unless eating and/or drinking.
- Customers must be fully vaccinated and show proof of vaccination.
- COVID-19 Screening will take place and contact information must be given.
- Do not enter the restaurant if you are having any COVID-19 symptoms.
- The health and safety measures laid out in Restaurants business safety plan will be strictly followed.

HFN Offices, ORRS and the Business Owners do have a COVID-19 health and safety plan in place and these measures will be strictly followed. Those who access the businesses must comply with the health and safety measures in place or they will not be served and asked to leave.

Remaining Closed to Visitors/General Public:

- Boat Launch
- Parks/Playground (*HFN Citizens only*) Please ensure to wipe of playground equipment after each use.
- Beach (*HFN Citizens only*)
- Open lakefront spaces
- Ball Diamond (*HFN Citizens only*)
- 17 Paudash Street (former Tent and Trailer Park site)
- Serpent Mounds (*HFN Citizens only*)

Events/Gatherings:

- Events/gatherings are not recommended at this time, due to the increased risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus, especially for those who are high-risk of severe illness.
- Limit gathering as much as possible. If you do gather, please follow all health and safety protocols over the next few weeks, especially during the holidays.
- If gathering, considering opening windows to increase air ventilation
- Do not attend gatherings if you are feeling unwell and/or have any of the COVID-19 symptoms.
- Take an antigen test prior to attending a gathering.

COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols:

Practice physical distancing of at least two metres (6ft) with those outside your household.

- Wear a face covering when physical distancing is a challenge or where it is mandatory to do so.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.

Face Coverings:

- For the best protection an N95 mask should be worn, if you are not fitted for an N95 mask, the next source of protection is a surgical mask. If you do not have either of these available the a clothe mask will be your next source of protection.

Antigen Testing:

- We have provided antigen tests (one per household), surgical masks and will have these available upon further request.
- These home antigen test are for Asymptomatic people.
- As noted above, take an antigen test if you plan on attending a gathering.

Vaccines/HFN Vaccine Clinic:

Vaccines are one of the tools in mitigating the risk of contracting and transmitting the COVID-19 virus. If you are vaccinated you can still get COVID-19, however the series of vaccines (3 doses) significantly decreases your risk of hospitalization, going into ICU, and/or death.

The next vaccine clinic for Hiawatha is scheduled for January 15, 2022. This clinic is available for 12+ years of age to receive their third dose (booster) and any person who would like to receive a first or second vaccine. Information for this clinic will be available in the January 2022 Newsletter. If you are eligible (3 months since second vaccine) and would like your third dose sooner than the Hiawatha Clinic, please visit the PPH Website on vaccine clinic information <https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-vaccine-clinic/#walkin>

Police Services:

For emergency services call **911**.

For other incidents that require Police attention, which is not an emergency, please call the OPP Line at **1-888-310-1122** to report an incident.

PLEASE NOTE: Given the current situation and the expected increase in COVID-19 cases, health and safety measures are being changed daily. Please watch for updates on potential changes nationally, regionally and locally. We will keep you informed of any further changes that may need to be made for Hiawatha.

Offices will be shut down from **December 20, 2021** for two weeks, opening **January 3, 2022**. If you require any supplies due to needing to self-isolate, please contact Chief Laurie Carr at 705-927-7012 or Administrator, Trisha Shearer at 705-977-0755 or Health Manager Tina Howard at 705-930-1107.

As it has been the case throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, things are once again changing very quickly. While we know this isn't the update you wanted to read, we thank you in advance for your efforts in keeping yourself, your family, your neighbours and Community safe.

“Our Citizens and Community remain our first priority and we will work to mitigate risks for best possible outcomes moving forward through the COVID-19 pandemic.”