

June 9, 2021

MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers

SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Planning and Actions

This week, the Health Coordination Table focused on the following key actions to enable Ontario's health care system to effectively respond to COVID-19:

- **Understanding the known evidence around the emerging Delta variant (B.1.617.2) in Ontario.**
 - Public Health Ontario presented current evidence on the variant B.1.617.2, also known as the Delta variant, emerging in Ontario. Early epidemiological data provides insights regarding transmissibility, severity of symptoms and vaccine effectiveness, however further investigation is underway.
- **Planning for the next phase of the testing strategy that considers shifting pandemic needs and new technology.**
 - The ministry, in collaboration with key partners, amended policies and regulations to increase the uptake of rapid antigen testing by making it easier to utilize, report and dispose of tests. In addition, the ministry expanded the Provincial Antigen Screening Program (PASP) into workplaces and pharmacy locations across Ontario and launched a PASP Portal through the Ontario Together website to streamline intake, onboarding and ordering.
 - The ministry is focussed on strengthening laboratory network infrastructure and surveillance tools and techniques to monitor for potential future outbreaks.
- **Reviewing the most recent scientific evidence and modelling to inform advice to the province on the ongoing pandemic response.**
 - The Science Advisory and Modelling Consensus Tables presented the latest COVID-19 case projections and trends, and the forecasted impact of the vaccination rollout on health system indicators.

- **Continuing to focus efforts on improving access to vaccinations and testing in high risk populations through the High Priority Community Strategy.**
 - The ministry provided an update on the impact of the community outreach and education programs on increasing vaccination and testing rates within specific high priority communities. The strategy leveraged partnerships with workplaces, faith-based groups and other community organizations to help ensure accessibility and equity in the services provided.
 - The ministry is working closely with partners including the Health Commons Solutions Lab and the High Priority Community Strategy lead agencies to reach outstanding populations that have not received first doses and accelerate the administration of second doses in these communities.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

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