

Caledon, Brampton Mayors call for all of Peel to be designated COVID hotspot

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On April 14, at Brampton City Hall, Mayor Patrick Brown was joined by Caledon Mayor Allan Thompson and Peel Region Medical Officer of Health Dr. Lawrence Loh to provide an update on the COVID-19 situation in Peel as well as the need for more vaccines.

With growing numbers in the Peel Region, Brown and Thompson talked about the need to designate the entire region as a hotspot to allow for more people to get vaccinated sooner.

‘I’ve been working urgently with (Mayor Thompson) on [highlighting] the urgency of vaccinating our essential workplaces,’ said Brown. ‘I would note that there are so many commonalities and similarities between Caledon and Brampton. Our factory settings bleed into each other, you look at Amazon plants in Caledon and Brampton, some of the people who work at the factories in Caledon come from Brampton and we’ve been working together to advocate for Peel Region.’

Thompson was adamant that Peel Region is the best in the province at getting residents vaccinated and the addition of pop-up clinics has been a big help in getting a larger demographic the vaccine. But he pleaded with the Provincial and Federal government that more vaccines must be made available to the region with the situation getting increasingly distressful.

‘Dr. Loh has been asking that the province make all of Peel a hotspot community. I know we’re going by postal codes, but the way we bleed into each other’s neighbourhood, it just doesn’t work,’ he said. ‘Peel needs to be a hotspot, period, end of story. We need a better coordination of communication, when the province makes bold statements about opening eligibility, they need to deliver and have the vaccines that come with it.’

‘We need our employment areas to all be vaccinated, but to do that we need the vaccines. We’re pleading not just with the Province, but as well as with the Federal government. We are a hotspot area, we need the vaccines, and we will get it done’ just like what we’ve been doing, putting needles into arms. We are asking the province to please give us vaccines so we can get our employment sectors’ like the Amazons, the Canadian Tires, and everywhere else’ we can get the needles in the arms and also get our community vaccinated as well. Getting needles into arms keeps our families safe, keeps our schools safe, and keeps our communities safe’ especially when we’re a hotspot.’

Dr. Loh opened his statement by providing an update on the third wave of COVID-19 in Peel with Caledon at a 12.9 per cent positivity with 305 cases per 100,000. He warned that the numbers are as bad as they’ve been, and residents need to do everything they can to stay home and safe.

‘These are the highest numbers we have seen since the pandemic began in the spring of 2020,’ said Loh. ‘Area hospitals are bracing for disaster; all surgeries and paediatric admissions have been cancelled. There are now callouts for healthcare providers’ I myself received one of them’ to support the significant demands for care that are occurring in the hospital and in ICU and in non-traditional places such as repurposed outpatient clinics. While our over 60-plus population still represents the majority that is facing severity and mortality, we are also increasingly seeing patients that are younger, sicker, and staying longer.’

‘Over the first two waves, we know that adherence to measures warded off the disaster and tragedy we’ve seen elsewhere in the world, but make no mistake, this wave is different. Our current situation is incredibly dire. We must decisively act to save lives and to allow our vaccine coverage to succeed and grow. As other places have done, we must close, vaccinate, and exit. Once again, I urge all of our residents to please stay home as much as you are able, connect virtually, and limit contact with those you do not live

with. If you must meet for an essential reason, always mask, distance, and keep it outdoors. If you are sick, do not meet; get tested, and self-isolate unless you need medical attention.?

Knowing that asking residents to stay home can be tough given their careers, Loh noted employers must do their part in making it as easy as possible on employees as the situation gets worse.

?I also call on our employers, while we work to figure out this vaccination priority that's been identified, please support our essential workforce at this time,? Loh said. ?Your workers cannot limit their contacts without your help. Ensure that you have a COVID-19 safety plan in your workplace, ensure that the precautions are being followed, consider reducing the work volume and capacity to limit risks, and if you do so, provide paid leave to your workers and also ensure you're providing paid leave to your workers if they fall sick or require time off for testing or to get vaccinated.?

According to Loh, there will be more information coming on the plan for pop-up clinics and the expansion of mobile offerings of the vaccine in the coming days, but for now, he asks people who are eligible must take advantage of it.

?Finally, I call on all our residents to get vaccinated when your time comes. In accordance with provincial direction, hospital and community vaccination clinics in Peel can be booked online for all residents age 60 and over?born in 1951 or earlier?or those 50 and older?born between 1951 and 1961?if they live in a provincially-defined hotspot. Please note, it is the province who defines these hotspots by postal code, however, with 25 of 33 neighbourhoods and 85 per cent of our population in Peel defined as such, it is Peel Public Health's view that all of Peel should be designated as a hotspot for simplicity and consistency in prioritization.

?Our mobile program, which has been in effect since January, also continues and has delivered 10,000 doses as of this date to apartments and other senior settings, shelters, and the homebound in our community. We are excited that with recent announcements we are now able to expand our mobile offerings into other venues such as community centres and workplaces as pop-ups for all comers 18-plus. The changes in the provincial priorities may delay our original projections to move to vaccinating those 45 and older by the end of the week. However, we are now vaccinating nearly 100,000 residents a week across all our channels with a record 12,500 doses in one day. We can avert disaster if we stick to the game plan to stay home, stay apart, stay safe, and when your turn comes to get your shot, close, vaccinate, and exit.?

For more information on vaccination eligibility and to book, visit peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine.