

Dr. Loh won't rule out potential proof-of-vaccine policy as cases rise

By Rob Paul

With the start of the school year under two weeks away, Peel continues to see a rise in COVID-19 cases.

The total case count in the Region has now reached 113,319 with 594 new cases since last week, after having just 275 new cases the previous week.

There has also been a rising mortality rate with Peel's death toll now at 922, 29 of which came in the last week.

In Caledon, the case count also continues to rise as the total has now hit 4,586 with 60 new cases since last week—that's nearly double the previous weeks new case count of 32. There has been one additional death to bring the Town to 22 fatalities attributed to the virus.

Peel Medical Officer of Health Dr. Lawrence Loh previously stated that August 24 is the last day for students to receive their second dose of the vaccine to ensure full protection upon returning to school. The vaccine coverage for those 12 and older in Peel has continued to steadily increase with 82.7 per cent having received at least one dose and 73.1 per cent being fully vaccinated.

With vaccine policies being a hot topic, at a press conference in Brampton City Hall on Wednesday, Loh didn't rule out the potential of implementing a proof-of-vaccine policy in the Region if the Province doesn't enact one.

"In the short-term, vaccine certificates can help reduce transmission and limit risks for those who are unvaccinated in settings where precautions cannot be maintained persistently," Loh said. "One thing that is consistent throughout our investigation is individuals who have not received two doses of the vaccine are at the greatest risk of infection and severity, notably hospitalization."

The Region has now administered 2,281,786 doses of the vaccine—26,812 in the last seven-day cycle (August 16 to 22). In total, 1,243,185 residents have received their first dose and 1,038,601 have been fully vaccinated.

In all of Peel, 72 per cent of residents have one dose and 63.5 per cent have completed the vaccination process. 83.1 per cent of residents 18 and older have one dose coverage and 73.8 per cent have full coverage.

"It's very clear the vaccination is working," said Loh. "It's safe, effective, and it reduces the risk of infection and greatly diminishes the risk of severe outcomes."

To book a vaccine in Peel, visit www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment.