

Move to Step Three on Friday comes as 'welcome relief,' says Mayor

By Rob Paul

At 12:01 a.m. on Friday, July 16, the Provincial government will be moving Ontario into Step Three of the provincial reopening.

Having moved into Step Two on June 30, Step Three was slated for 21 days later (July 21) but was moved up due to Ontario's success with vaccinations.

'Thanks to the tireless efforts of our frontline heroes, and the ongoing commitment of Ontarians to get vaccinated, we have surpassed the targets we set in order to enter Step Three of our Roadmap,' said Premier Doug Ford. 'While this is welcome news for everyone who wants a return to normal, we will not slow down our efforts to fully vaccinate everyone who wants to be and put this pandemic behind us once and for all.'

To enter into Step Three of the Roadmap to Reopen, Ontario needed to have vaccinated 70 to 80 per cent of people 18 and older with one dose and 25 per cent with two doses for at least two weeks. As of July 13, 79.38 per cent of adults had one dose and 57.21 per cent were fully vaccinated.

The Province also needed to see improvements in key public health and health care indicators. After entering Step Two, during the period of June 29 to July 5, the provincial case rate decreased by 23.3 per cent.

'Ontario has continued to see improvements in key health indicators, allowing the province to move to Step Three of the Roadmap and safely resume more of the activities we've missed,' said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. 'While this is exciting news, we most still remain vigilant and continue to follow the public health measure we know work and keep us safe. Vaccines remain our ticket out of the pandemic so if you haven't booked your appointment yet, please do so today.'

The province will remain in Step Three for at least 21 days and until 80 per cent of the eligible population aged 12 and over has received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 75 per cent have received their second, with no public health unit having less than 70 per cent of their eligible population aged 12 and over fully vaccinated.

Step Three will include outdoor social gatherings and organized public event for up to 100 people; indoor social gatherings and organized public events for up to 25 people; indoor dining with no limits to the number of patrons per table; retail with capacity limited to ensure physical distancing; indoor religious services, rites or ceremony gatherings with physical distancing; indoor sports and recreational fitness facilities with capacity limit; personal care services with capacity limited to ensure physical distancing; museums, casinos and bingo halls with capacity limits; and cinemas, concert, theatres, and other performing arts venues with capacity limits.

Face coverings in indoor public settings and physical distancing requirements remain in place throughout Step Three.

'Thanks to the continued efforts of Ontarians adhering to public health measures and advice, as well as going out to get vaccinated, we have seen most key health indicators continue to improve,' said Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. 'However, the pandemic is not over, and we must all remain vigilant and continue following the measures and advice in place, as the Delta variant continues to pose a threat to public health.'

Starting Friday, July 23, the Town of Caledon will begin reopening facilities and amenities based on the Province's Step Three Roadmap.

'Moving into Stage Three comes as a welcomed relief to our community,' said Mayor Allan Thompson. 'I can't thank our healthcare and frontline heroes enough for their tireless dedication over the last year and a half. As we get our summer back, let's

continue to stay vigilant and follow the advice of our healthcare professionals.?

Residents are strongly reminded to continue to follow all health and safety guidelines including getting both vaccinations, maintaining physical distance and wearing a mask.

Indoor programs and activities at recreation centres will begin to open starting July 23 with fitness centres at Southfields Community Centre (SCC) and Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness. Pools at these facilities will open on July 26 along with one ice pad at Mayfield Recreation Complex?another ice pad will open towards the end of August at Caledon East Recreation Complex.

As of July 13, Peel was continuing to see improvements with decreasing total COVID cases per week. The Region sits at 111,571 total cases?130 more cases in the last seven days?there have been two more deaths in the last week, bringing the total to 818.

In Caledon, the numbers are promising with no deaths in the last week?keeping the total at 20?and the total cases has decreased to 4,436, with eight previous cases deemed false positives.

The vaccination efforts in Peel remain strong with 152,499 doses administered in the last seven-day cycle (July 5 to 11), bringing the total doses administered to 1,940,337. In total, 1,185,955 individuals have at least one dose and 754,382 have completed their vaccination.

Thresholds continue to be met in the Region with 79.2 per cent of adults having one dose and 45.4 per cent with both. 78.3 per cent of residents over 12 have a dose with 52.1 per cent completing the vaccination process?as a whole 68.1 per cent of all residents have one dose and 45.4 per cent of the Region is fully vaccinated.

For more information on vaccinations in Peel and to book an appointment, visit www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment.