

Province reverts back to Stage 2 as COVID cases increase

By Rob Paul

As of Wednesday, January 5, Ontario has moved back into Stage 2 of its reopening plan as a result of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

Due to trends showing increased COVID-19 hospitalizations, the government has temporarily increased measures for at least the next 21 days.

"As we continue with our provincial vaccine booster efforts, we must look at every option to slow the spread of the highly contagious Omicron variant," said Premier Doug Ford. "Putting these targeted and time-limited measures in place will give us more opportunity to deliver vaccines to all Ontarians and ensure everyone has maximum protection against this virus."

The increased measures include reducing social gathering limits to five people indoors and 10 people outdoors; closing indoor dining at restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments; Outdoor dining with restrictions; requiring businesses and organizations to ensure employees work remotely unless the nature of their work requires them to be on-site; limiting capacity at indoor weddings, funerals, and religious services, rites and ceremonies to 50 per cent capacity of the particular room; retail settings, including shopping malls, permitted at 50 per cent capacity; personal care services permitted at 50 per cent capacity and other restrictions; public libraries limited to 50 per cent capacity; closing indoor concert venues, theatres, cinemas, rehearsals; closing indoor sport and recreational fitness facilities including gym.

Due to the Provincial restrictions, the Town of Caledon's indoor recreation amenities will be temporarily closed and programs and services will be suspended until further notice.

Town Hall will be open for essential in-person services only. To book an appointment, contact Service Caledon 905-584-2272 x7750.

Alongside the restrictions, all publicly funded and private schools will move to remote learning starting January 5 until at least January 17.

"Children will continue to receive live virtual learning during this period, led by their teacher, with full access to school-based academic and mental health supports," said Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education. "We will continue to work closely with the Chief Medical Officer of Health to keep our communities safe and ensure that Ontario students get back to in-person learning as soon as possible."

In Peel, since December 22, there have been 18,748 new cases of COVID-19 to bring the Regions total to 141,551. There have also been seven new deaths since then to bring the total to 1,043.

Since December 22, Caledon has seen 1,063 new cases of COVID-19 to bring the Town total to 6,247 cases. The death total didn't increase, remaining at 22.

"While the risks for severe illness are lower with Omicron than with the previous variants of concern, it is far more transmissible and hospitalizations are expected to continue to increase, placing greater pressure on our health system," said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health.

As Peel continues to push towards stronger vaccine coverage, the Region has administered 2,909,175 total doses of the Vaccine. 1,375,268 individuals have one dose, 1,230,617 have two doses, and 303,290 have received their third dose booster.

In total, 77.7 per cent of Peel residents have two dose coverage and 83.1 per cent have single dose coverage. Of those 12 and older, 89 per cent have both doses and 92.3 per cent have initiated the vaccination process?82 per cent of those five and older have both doses and 87.7 per cent have one dose.

To book a vaccine in the Region of Peel, visit www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment. To schedule a third dose booster, visit covid19.ontariohealth.ca/.

To download or print a copy of your proof of vaccination, visit covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccine-booking-support#proof-of-vaccination. To learn more about the official QR code system Ontario has implemented and to access yours, visit covid-19.ontario.ca/get-proof/.