

Reopening takes Step forward just in time for Canada Day

By **ROB PAUL**

On June 30, the Provincial government continued the reopening process with Step Two moved up two days because of the progress Ontario has made with vaccinations.

The decision to move it up came with the provincewide vaccination rate now surpassing the targets outlined in the province's Roadmap to Reopen, and on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

"Because of the tireless work of our healthcare heroes, and the record setting success of our vaccine rollout, we are able to move into Step Two ahead of schedule on June 30 with the support of our public health experts," said Premier Doug Ford. "We are proceeding safely with the re-opening of our province and will continue to work around the clock until the job is done."

In order to enter Step Two of the Roadmap, Ontario needed to have vaccinated 70 per cent of adults with one dose and 20 per cent with two doses for at least two weeks, ensuring a strong level of protection against COVID-19.

As of June 29, 77.35 per cent of adults in Ontario had been vaccinated with one dose, and 35.41 per cent with two doses. Over 14 million doses of the vaccine have been administered in Ontario.

"Due to a continued improvement in key indicators, Ontario is ready to enter Step Two of our Roadmap, allowing us to safely and gradually ease public health measures while continuing to stop the spread of COVID-19," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Thank you to the Ontarians who rolled up their sleeves to help us reach this exciting milestone."

Every dose administered brings us one step closer to the things we've missed, so please sign up to receive the vaccine when it's your turn."

Step Two of the reopening focuses on expanding the outdoor activities that are allowed and opening limited indoor services with small numbers.

The reopening includes: outdoor social gatherings and organized public events with up to 25 people; indoor social gatherings and organized public events with up to five people; essential and other select retail permitted at 50 per cent capacity; non-essential retail permitted at 25 per cent capacity; personal care services where face coverings can be worn at all times, and at 25 per cent capacity; outdoor dining with up to 6 people per table, with exceptions for larger households and other restrictions; indoor religious services, rites, or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services permitted at up to 25 per cent capacity of the particular room; outdoor fitness classes limited to the number of people who can maintain three metres of physical distance; Outdoor concert venues, theatres and cinemas, with spectators permitted at 25 per cent capacity.

The Province has already surpassed Step Three vaccination targets, but must remain in Step Two for at least 21 days to allow recent vaccinations to reach their full effectiveness and to evaluate the impact of Step Two on key public health and health care indicators.

With Step Two underway, the Region of Peel has continued to see improved COVID numbers. As on June 28, there were 111,302 total cases in Peel just 161 more cases since last week and 813 deaths, with 7 seven more in the last week.

In Caledon, there's been four more cases in the last week bringing the Town's total to 4,438. The death toll hasn't increased; it remains at 20.

As for vaccinations, Peel's numbers are on par with the province. 77.3 per cent of adults have at least one dose with 34.3 per cent at two doses. 66.1 per cent of the total population have one dose and 27.6 have two.

In total, the Region has administered 1,621,674 doses of the vaccine with 177,281 in the last seven-day cycle (June 20 to 27). 1,159,062 individuals in Peel have begun the vaccination process and 462,612 have completed it.

A large part of Peel's vaccination success has come from the Hockey Hub mass vaccination centre at the CAA Centre in Brampton. It's on track to deliver nearly 50,000 vaccinations to support the Region's fight against the Delta variant.

Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones recently visited the hub and praised the collaboration efforts seen from private organizations, public health, and the Government to get the Hockey Hub running.

"We are seeing improvements in province wide public health trends, but the race against the COVID-19 variants is imperative to the province's reopening plans," said Jones. "The teamwork shown between Peel Public Health, the Grey Bruce Health Unit, and the private organizations who came together to establish this hub and expand our vaccination capacity is truly commendable."

The site opened in late May to the public and since then has delivered nearly 50,00 doses in 17 clinic days between May 26 and June 30. The materials from the clinic will be redeployed to other vaccine clinics in the region following the closure of the site.

For more information on vaccine clinic locations or to book a COVID-19 vaccine in Peel, visit peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment/#clinics.