

November 7, 2020 (revised November 8, 2020)

Dear Peel Residents, Employers, Business Owners and Operators:

**RE: Enhanced Public Health Measures in Peel Region**

As COVID-19 transmission continues to grow in our community, we are at a point of significant crisis that threatens lives, livelihoods, and our healthcare system. Over the past year, I have been grateful for all your efforts to implement public health recommendations to protect the health and safety of our community.

Current data suggests that the second wave observed to have started in our community in mid-October is far from over. Concerningly, in the past week area hospitals have begun to reach capacity as a direct consequence of a surge in COVID-19 admissions. This means any further growth of the COVID-19 pandemic in our community will overwhelm our efforts to keep our community safe, ensure access to hospital and healthcare services, and prevent mortality.

Yesterday, the Province has moved Peel Region into the Red-Control stage of the provincial *Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework* in response to the concerning trends of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in our community and the need for immediate action to prevent further cases and fatalities. However, this new framework may result in a small but material re-opening of certain high-risk businesses. Data and evidence from our community and internationally demonstrate that categorical reopening encourages more person-to-person interactions. Even with precautions in place, increased contact and interactions at our current levels of transmission and pandemic growth risks more COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths.

This means additional measures are necessary to continue to limit opportunities for contact and transmission in our community to counterbalance the loosening of control measures in these settings and drive cases downwards.

This letter thus outlines my instructions on additional measures required to control the spread of COVID-19 in our community. As Medical Officer of Health for the Region of Peel, I issue these instructions pursuant to Ontario Regulation 263/20, Rules for Areas in Stage 2, s.2(2). In doing so, I am instructing all Peel residents or persons responsible for a business or organization that is permitted to open under the *Reopening Ontario A Flexible Response to COVID-19, Act, 2020* Regulation 263/20 to adopt the following additional requirements above and beyond the Provincial regulations, effective November 9, 2020 as of 12:01 a.m., and until further notice, unless otherwise specified:

- 1. Cease all wedding receptions/gatherings in business establishments effective 12.01 a.m. November 13, 2020 through to at least January 7, 2021, though this may be extended as necessary.**
- 2. Cease all other large celebratory gatherings (except wedding receptions/gatherings as specified in instruction 1 and including but not limited to**

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celebrations linked to holidays or life events e.g., birthdays, engagements, retirements, gift showers, etc.) in business establishments effective 12.01 a.m. November 13, 2020, until otherwise instructed.

3. **For all workplaces, I instruct that operators:**
  - a. prohibit non-essential visitors<sup>1</sup> from attending at their facilities.
  - b. enable, as possible, work from home options for employees.
  
4. **For gyms and fitness centres, I instruct the following:** While they remain discouraged, should group classes be held, operators should:
  - a. direct participants to pre-register for a specific group class that might be offered (i.e. no walk-in participants permitted), in addition to the provincially mandated registration to enter the facility.
  - b. maintain a class list(s) with names and contact information of participants to assist with cohorting and contact tracing in the event of an exposure.
  - c. Retain class contact lists for a period of at least one month; and only disclose the records to a Medical Officer of Health or an inspector under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* on request for a purpose specified in section 2 of that Act or as otherwise required by law.
  
5. **For rented meeting and event spaces including banquet halls,** as a matter of urgent necessity for the containment of the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus I am recommending and requesting that the Chair of the Region exercise his authority to make an order under section 4 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.9 for the closure of the business of renting or otherwise making available for compensation, meeting and event spaces in Peel, including banquet halls other than for the purposes of government or court system administration or operations.

In the event that such an order is not made, or is for any reason not in effect, I hereby instruct, for such meeting and event spaces including banquet halls, the following:

- a. Only staff are permitted on-site.
- b. No events are permitted on-site; except for operations by or on behalf of a government; or for the purpose of delivering or supporting the delivery of government services.
- c. These facilities can otherwise only operate for the purposes of preparing and providing food for off-site consumption.

I also issue the following strong recommendations to all Peel residents:

1. **Restrict close contacts to your household and essential supports.** This is defined as close contact (interactions within 2 metres) only with household members and essential supports<sup>2</sup>. It should also be reinforced that, if unwell, household members must also isolate from each other.

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<sup>1</sup> Persons whose presence is not essential to the functioning of the workplace as a workplace

<sup>2</sup> Persons who are essential to maintaining physical and mental health

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- a. **For individuals who live alone**, this permits close contact with one other household and one or two essential supports. If possible, a household should be exclusive to that individual living alone.
- 2. Visiting private homes:** Any attendance in or visit to a private home or residential premise, including social gatherings (both indoor and outdoor) beyond those that routinely live at that address should cease until further notice, with the following exceptions:
  - a. Emergency reasons (prevent risk of injury or harm)
  - b. Emergency repairs
  - c. Renovations or construction
  - d. One-to-one teaching and instruction (e.g. tutoring)

Visits under the exceptions should always ensure proper precautions are taken including mask wearing, distancing, hand hygiene, and isolating if sick.

- 3. Limit in-person activities outside the home to essential activities only.** This includes work, school, fitness and exercise, access to healthcare, and the purchase of food or drink, gasoline, and automobile maintenance.
- 4. Discretionary and in-person activities.** Cancel, postpone, or hold virtually any other discretionary in-person activities, or participate only with your household and essential supports.
- 5. For premises that serve food and drinks, seating in groups be limited to the members of an immediate household and essential supports, with such groups being separated by 2 metres of distance from other groups.**
- 6. For places of worship, I strongly recommend leaders of such venues to consider conducting religious services, rites, or ceremonies virtually as much as possible and, if required to be held in-person, to consider the following limits:**
  - a. Indoor attendance to 30% of capacity to a maximum 50 people per facility.
  - b. Seating to the immediate household and essential supports, separated by 2 metres of distance between other groups.

These measures are intended to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in Peel by addressing certain continuing drivers (social, household, and workplace) of transmission in balancing the increased transmission anticipated with the recently permitted re-openings of businesses. All measures will be reviewed regularly as future circumstances dictate.

With my thanks for your assistance and efforts,



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