

conference at Shoppers Drug Mart in Huntsville, where he was accompanied by health minister Christine Elliott, Shoppers Drug Mart president Jeff Leger, Huntsville mayor Karin Terziano, Parry Sound-Muskoka MPP Norm Miller, Parry Sound-Muskoka MP Scott Aitchison, and Natalie Bubela, chief executive officer of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare.

“We need to make it easier to get a COVID test, as it is for a flu shot,” Ford said. “Here in Huntsville, this location will take some pressure off the local assessment centre, in addition to working with our partners to increase the number of testing locations.”

The testing will be available by appointment only for people without symptoms. With the exception of Huntsville, most of the 60 pharmacies to provide testing are located in the three regions of the province with the highest number of cases. Testing will be available on Friday at selected Shoppers Drug Mart, Rexall, and independent pharmacies in Toronto, North York, Markham, East York, Scarborough, Weston, Etobicoke, Mississauga, Brampton, Ottawa, Kanata, Nepean, and Huntsville. The province says further locations will be added in the coming weeks.

Ford also announced three hospitals in Toronto — Mount Sinai Hospital, Women’s College Hospital, and University Health Network — will begin offering the less-intrusive saliva-based COVID-19 test, while the Ontario government waits for Health Canada to approve the test for widespread use.

“Health Canada, we need your help,” Ford said. “All I’m hearing is crickets from Health Canada right now on the saliva test. These types of tests make it easier to test people, especially kids.”

Of the 335 new cases in Ontario, the majority are in Toronto (102), Peel (79), and Ottawa (65), with smaller increases in York (30), Halton (15), Waterloo (13), and Simcoe Muskoka (9). The remaining 27 public health units are reporting 5 or fewer cases, with 19 reporting no new cases. Of today’s cases, 69% are among people under the age of 40.

There have been 3 new deaths, and hospitalizations have increased by 6 to 88. The backlog of tests under investigation has increased by 8,291 to 48,079. There are 42 cases in Ontario schools, with 21 student cases, 5 staff cases, and 16 cases among people who are not identified. In licensed child care settings, there are 35 confirmed cases, with 5 child cases and 8 staff cases.

In the greater Kawartha region, there are no new cases to report in Prince Edward and Hastings counties. Reports for Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland, and Haliburton will be released later this afternoon; this story will be updated when those reports are available.

Since the pandemic began in the greater Kawartha region, there have been 111 confirmed