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Health unit urges public to stay course as COVID-19 keep rising

Forecasting suggests that Ontario could be around 1,000 cases per day in the first half of October and see between 200 and 300 patients with COVID-19 in ICU beds per day if cases continue to grow

News 02:54 PM by [Catherine Whitnall \(/kawartha-author/catherine-whitnall/1E0E6AE6-EB40-4A3C-A4A9-CC957BF70779/\)](#) 

<mailto:cwhitnall@mykawartha.com> Kawartha Lakes This Week



The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit urges everyone to continue to subscribe to pandemic guidelines such as masking and physical distancing, and also to get their free flu shot as the second wave of COVID-19 has officially arrived. - Torstar file photo

Long before the province declared a second wave, the local health unit began preparing for another battle with COVID-19, further complicated by the arrival of cold and flu season.

However, the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit's efforts and Ontario's Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19 are only two parts of a crucial three-pronged approach.

Over the course of the first wave, the health unit responded to a significant number of cases and contacts and worked with the long-term-care sector through a very large COVID-19 outbreak followed by supporting the reopening of local communities, explained Anne Marie Holt, director of health protection.

"We've never really stopped, and plan to continue with these efforts ... as COVID cases increase, we will resume all of our work in guiding people through COVID-19 test results, talking to people identified as confirmed cases, and speaking with anyone identified as a contact to ensure they self-isolate, go for testing and remain safe," said Holt.

"The health unit is prepared for this second wave and ready to redeploy staff and resources to further ramp up its pandemic response if the situation warrants it. If further COVID-19 restrictions and closures are also put in place by the provincial government, we are prepared to assist in educating and implementing those measures in the City of Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland County and Haliburton County.

Holt adds the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in Ontario is a reminder for vigilance.

"Even letting our guard down a little can result in an increase in cases as we are seeing now ... Because the majority of new COVID-19 cases in Ontario involve people under 40, it's important for this age group in particular to heed public health advice and do all it can to prevent COVID-19. While young people may tend to have stronger immune systems, we have seen situations where they can also be seriously affected by COVID-19. There is also the concern that younger people could spread the COVID-19 to their older relatives — fathers, mothers, aunts, uncles and grandparents — and put them at risk of coronavirus," said Holt, who reminds people to also think about supporting mental health as well as physical.

"The pandemic can feel overwhelming, so that makes it extra important to stay calm and grounded and seek mental health support if needed."

In addition to actions already being done during the pandemic, the health unit recommends people also get their free flu shot — it won't prevent COVID-19 but can protect against influenza — and download the COVID Alert phone app, which provides notification of virus exposure.

by [Catherine Whitnall \(/kawartha-author/Catherine-Whitnall/1e0e6ae6-eb40-4a3c-a4a9-cc957bf70779/\)](/kawartha-author/Catherine-Whitnall/1e0e6ae6-eb40-4a3c-a4a9-cc957bf70779/)

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