

County - three businesses, a congregate setting and a school - she anticipates moving to the yellow 'protect' level next week.

Noseworthy pointed out that, while the local health unit's incident rates are well below many other areas, the combination of proximity to other health unit regions and recent local outbreak cases are certainly cause for concern.

Since the end of June, the local health unit reported 120 new cases of COVID-19; 46 of these in just 14 days. The local positivity rate, reported through assessment and testing centres, sat at .4 in early November, but between Nov. 22 and 28, rose to .7. Noseworthy also points out the fact the health unit is surrounded by health unit regions already in advanced levels. Peterborough and Hastings and Prince Edward counties are yellow, Simcoe Muskoka district, orange, and Durham Region is red.

"So we're surrounded by health units that have had higher levels of activity which we need to take seriously," said Noseworthy who anticipates the province will likely announce the local colour change on Friday (Dec. 4). "When you look at Southern Ontario, as of last week, HKPR and [Leeds, Grenville] Lanark were the only two health units still in the green zone."

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Moving into the yellow zone means enhanced targeted enforcement, fines and enhanced education to limit further transmission. Increased restrictions means for bars and restaurants, no alcohol will be served after 11 p.m., tables will be set for a maximum of six, operating hours will be reduced, contact records for all customers will be kept and music will be turned down so people don't have to talk louder and potentially spread droplets farther.

For gyms and recreational facilities, it means three-metre physical distancing, attendance by appointment-only, and businesses having to develop and post safety plans.

Noseworthy is especially concerned that the health unit's reproduction rate is currently "hovering between yellow and orange," but notes this is only one factor that determines zones and responses. She is