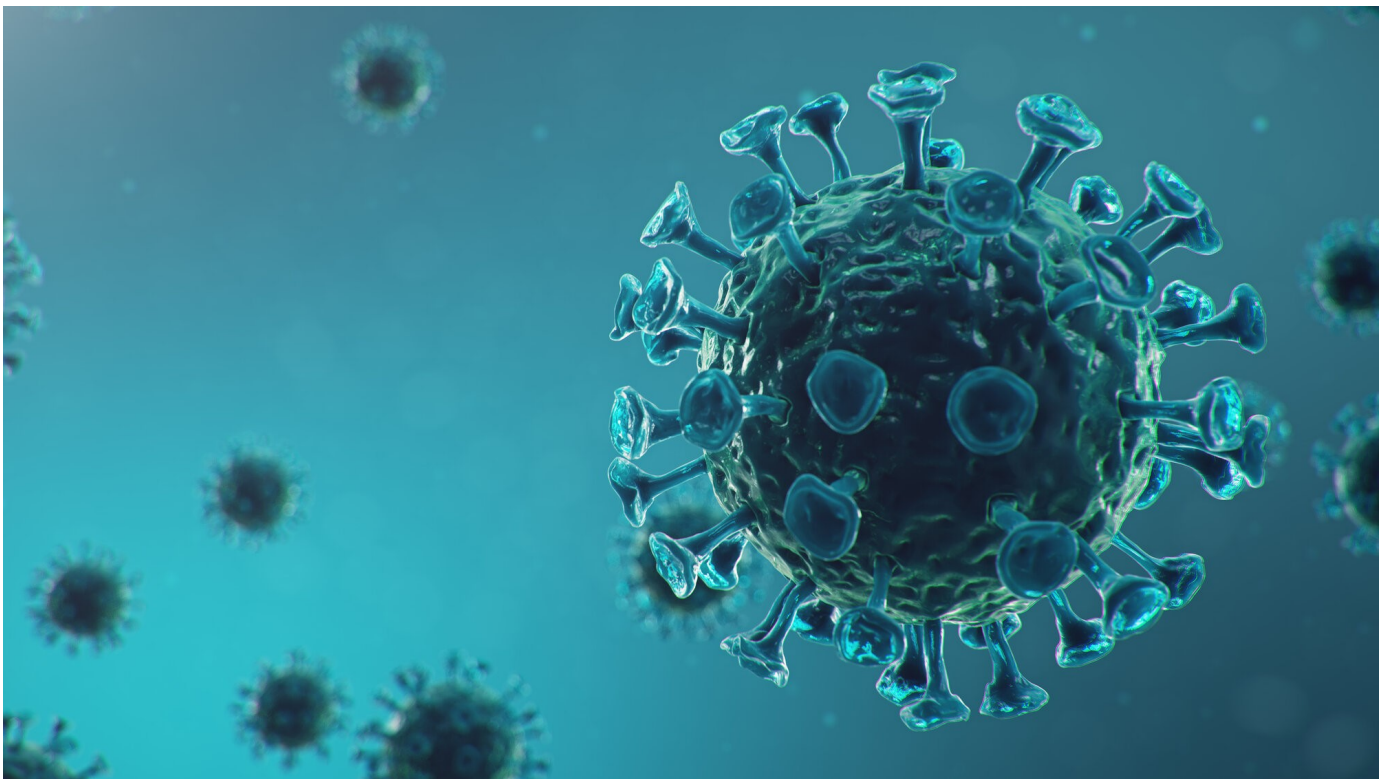


THE LINDSAY ADVOCATE

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Toronto breaks down neighbourhoods where COVID is occurring – why not here?

Published on December 4, 2020 — in Health — by Roderick Bennis

As COVID-19 numbers begin to climb again, many Kawartha Lakes residents are asking

why the local health unit isn't breaking down COVID numbers by neighbourhood or

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community.

Medical Officer of Health for the Haliburton Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit, Dr. Lynn Noseworthy, says it's all about balancing the right to privacy with the public's right to have good information about infection rates.



MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR THE HALIBURTON
KAWARTHA PINE RIDGE DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT, DR. LYNN
NOSEWORTHY.

“In reporting COVID-19 cases in our area, the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit must walk a fine line between personal privacy and the public's right to know,” says Noseworthy.

“That is why we have made the decision to only list local COVID-19 cases by county, not the specific town, township or neighbourhood in which a person lives.”

The Advocate pointed out that Toronto does a more detailed job of providing information by neighbourhood, but Noseworthy says the same comparison can't be made.

“We know areas with larger populations or

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more cases in those highly populated areas may include a break down of cases...(but) because of the relatively small populations of our communities, it could be very easy to identify someone who tests positive for COVID-19,” she says.

“We have a legal duty to protect personal health information, while also informing the public about potential health risks in the community,” the medical officer of health added.

The local health unit’s approach to reporting local COVID-19 cases strikes that balance, according to Noseworthy.

COVID cases are on the rise locally and across Ontario, although as of Dec. 4 Kawartha Lakes area is still ‘green,’ one of only a handful of areas still shaded that colour on the province’s infection rate charting system. The city has eight active cases of COVID-19 and is expected to move to yellow soon.

For more information on infection rates in the local health unit’s catchment area, [visit here](#).

Noseworthy said it’s important to remember that “COVID-19 is circulating throughout our communities.”

“When we are out and about – no matter where that is...we need to continue taking important public health precautions to protect ourselves and others.” She reminds people to stay home if ill, wear a mask, practice physical distancing by remaining two metres apart from others, wash hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water — and refrain from non-essential travel, especially to high-risk areas.

With an increased number of local cases and people from other communities, she says, it is these prevention measures that will help stop the spread of the virus, “more so than knowing that someone in your town tested positive for COVID-19.”

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