

As provincial data and individual public health unit data will not be available on New Year's Day as it is a statutory holiday, kawarthaNOW will not be posting a COVID-19 update on January 1. Data for January 1 will be included in the January 2 update.

On the heels of intense criticism of Ontario finance minister Rod Phillips contravening provincial public health directives by taking a personal vacation to the Caribbean in December, the federal government announced today that all air travellers entering Canada must prove they have had a negative PCR COVID-19 test within 72 hours before arriving in the country.

“We have implemented some of the strongest border measures in the world,” said Bill Blair, federal public safety and emergency preparedness minister, during a media conference. “Today, we want to reinforce a very simple but important message: we strongly advise against travel unless it is absolutely necessary. No government in Canada can prevent Canadians from travelling, but we want to be very clear – we strongly advise against all discretionary travel.”

While the government did not provide a date for when the negative test requirement will be enacted, Blair emphasized it does not replace the mandatory 14-day quarantine period when travellers enter the country.

“If you must travel, understand that upon your return to Canada, you must follow guidelines and quarantine for 14 days,” Blair said. “It’s not just the right thing to do, it’s the law.”

In the greater Kawarthas region, there are 24 new cases to report and 19 additional cases resolved, with the number of active cases across the region increasing by 4 to 115.

Most of today's new cases are in Toronto (with another record increase of 998), Peel (441), York (408), Durham (158), Windsor-Essex (144), and Halton (114).

There are double-digit increases in Niagara (82), Hamilton (69), Waterloo (69), Ottawa (68), Middlesex-London (67), Simcoe Muskoka (65), Southwestern Public Health (46), Lambton (40), Brant (25), Chatham-Kent (21), Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (20), Huron Perth (17), Eastern Ontario Health Unit (16), and Leeds, Grenville & Lanark (12), with smaller increases in Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (8) and North Bay Parry Sound (6).

The remaining 12 health units are reporting 5 or fewer new cases, with 3 health units (all in northern Ontario) reporting no new cases at all.

New infections continue to predominate in people 40 years of age and older, with 52% of today's cases in that age group. The highest number of cases (1,039) remains among people ages 20-39, followed by 885 cases among people ages 40-59 and 458 cases among people ages 60-79. With 2,237 more cases resolved since yesterday, the percentage of resolved cases