

— although we still have a long way to go before reaching herd immunity, which requires an estimated minimum of 70% of the population to be immunized.

The bad news is that Ontario, now officially in the third wave of the pandemic, is reporting 1,745 new cases today. This is the highest daily increase since January 31 when 1,969 cases were reported, and drives the seven-day average of daily cases up by 53 to 1,480.

The province is reporting 39 more confirmed cases of the B.1.1.7 UK variant, for a total of 1,175, and 1 more case of the B.1.351 South Africa variant, for a total of 48. However, presumed variants of concern now make up around half of all new cases.

In the greater Kawarthas region, there are 20 new cases to report and an additional 15 cases resolved, with the number of active cases across the region increasing by 9 to 110. An outbreak at Gzowski College student residence at Trent University was declared on March 19. See below for details for each health unit in the region.

Most of today's new cases are in Toronto (478), Peel (344), York (174), and Hamilton (116).

There are double-digit increases in Durham (96), Ottawa (73), Halton (53), Thunder Bay (52), Waterloo (35), Simcoe Muskoka (34), Sudbury (30), Lambton (29), Windsor-Essex (27), Middlesex-London (26), Niagara (25), Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (25), Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (22), Leeds, Grenville & Lanark (16), Northwestern (15), Chatham-Kent (14), Southwestern (12), and Eastern Ontario (11), with smaller increases in Haldimand-Norfolk (9), Brant (7), and Peterborough (6).

The remaining 9 health units are reporting 5 or fewer new cases, with 3 health units reporting no new cases at all.

Of today's new cases, 56% are among people 39 and younger, with the highest number of cases (625) among people ages 20-39 followed by 490 cases among people ages 40-59.

With 1,296 more cases resolved since yesterday, the percentage of resolved cases has decreased by 0.1% to 93.7%. The average positivity rate across Ontario has increased by 0.2% from yesterday to 3.3%, meaning that 33 out of every 1,000 tests performed were positive for COVID-19 on March 18.

Ontario is reporting 10 new COVID-19 deaths today, with no new deaths in long-term care homes. Ontario has averaged 12 new daily deaths over the past week, a decrease of 1 from yesterday.

Hospitalizations have increased by 29 from yesterday to 759, with the number of patients with COVID-19 in ICUs increasing by 5 to 309, and the number of patients with COVID-19 on ventilators decreasing by 10 to 176.