

Public Health Ontario has confirmed 36 cases of the B.1.617 variant, first identified in India, have been detected in the province.

“I am extremely concerned about the threat of this latest variant,” said Premier Doug Ford in a statement on Saturday, pleading with the federal government to prohibit all non-essential travel to Canada immediately. “The images we are seeing from other parts of the world right now are heartbreaking. These deadly new variants are causing devastation in India and other countries. We can’t let that happen here.”

There are also 2,955 more cases of the B.1.1.7 UK variant, 16 more cases of the B.1.351 South Africa variant, and 32 more cases of the P.1 Brazilian variant.

Hospitalizations have decreased slightly for the second day in a row, but ICU admissions and patients on ventilators have increased to new record highs. More than 4.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have now been administered in Ontario, with 30% of the population now having received at least one dose; an estimated 70-90% of the population must be immunized to achieve herd immunity.

In the greater Kawartha region, there are 35 new cases to report and an additional 33 cases resolved, with the number of active cases increasing by 2 to 279.

Most of the new cases reported today are in Toronto (1,191), Peel (1,014), York (406), Niagara (226), Durham (199), Ottawa (158), Hamilton (133), Waterloo (111), and Halton (109).

There are double-digit increases reported today in Middlesex-London (96), Simcoe Muskoka (86), Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (78), Windsor-Essex (45), Eastern Ontario (32), Brant (32), Haldimand-Norfolk (21), Southwestern (16), Porcupine (15), Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge (14), Grey Bruce (14), Leeds, Grenville & Lanark (12), and Lambton (12), with smaller increases in Northwestern (9), Thunder Bay (9), Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington (9), Peterborough (8), Huron Perth (7), Hastings Prince Edward (6).

The remaining 6 health units are reporting 5 or fewer new cases, with all of them reporting at least 1 case.

Of today’s new cases, 56% are among people 39 and younger, with the highest number of cases (1,594) among people ages 20-39 followed by 1,198 cases among people ages 40-59 and 707 cases among people 19 and under.

With 4,332 more cases resolved since yesterday, the percentage of resolved cases has increased by 0.1% to at 88.8% — the fifth day in a row of an increase in resolved cases. The average positivity rate across Ontario has decreased by 1.0% to 7.8%, meaning that 78 out of every 1,000 tests performed were positive for COVID-19 on April 23.