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LOCAL : NEWS

COVID cases continue to soar in Kawartha Lakes and Northumberland

Kawartha Lakes had 28 new COVID cases Dec. 23 while Northumberland had 23 new cases, totalling 51 for the area covered by the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit in one day

Thu., Dec. 23, 2021 |  2 min. read

As of Dec. 23, there were 204 new cases of COVID-19 reported to the Haliburton, Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit in the past week alone.

COVID case counts have been on a sharp increase over the past week in the area covered by the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, with 15 and 16 new cases reported Dec. 16 and 17 respectively, followed by three days of cases in the twenties with 27, 23 and 29, before jumping again to 43 new cases being reported on Dec. 21 and 51 new cases being reported Dec. 22.

There were 28 new cases confirmed in Kawartha Lakes December 23 and 23 new cases in Northumberland. Two people with COVID-19 were admitted to hospital in the past two weeks, with one currently in the ICU.

The Omicron variant, first detected in South Africa but identified in Ontario since the end of November, was first tentatively identified in a Northumberland case December 15. The Omicron variant has proven to be more transmissible than the previously-dominant Delta variant, according to a health unit press release, but preliminary data showed the new variant to make patients less ill. However, data also showed that current vaccines were less effective against Omicron than Delta.

As of December 23, there are five ongoing outbreaks reported by the health unit; three in Northumberland and two in Kawartha Lakes. Three schools, North Hope Central Public School in Campbellcroft and St. Dominic Elementary School and Leslie Frost Public School in Lindsay are in outbreaks as well as Warkworth Institution and Extendicare Port Hope.

As of Dec. 23, there are 69 active cases of COVID-19 in Kawartha Lakes and one probable case, of the 1,500 total cases confirmed since the beginning of the pandemic. There have been 57 hospitalizations as well as 45 deaths and 13 probable deaths to date.

In Northumberland active cases are up to 95 of the total of 1,234 cases confirmed since the beginning of the pandemic. To-date there have been 42 hospitalizations and 18 confirmed COVID-19 deaths.

In Haliburton, there are nine active COVID cases of the 173 total cases to-date. Four people have been hospitalized since the beginning of the pandemic and one death has been attributed to COVID in that area.

According to the health unit's COVID tracking system, since July 1, 48.1 per cent of confirmed COVID cases are in people who are unvaccinated or have an unknown vaccination status, whereas they make up 52.6 per cent of cases that are hospitalized or admitted into the ICU. Fully vaccinated people account for 41 per cent of confirmed cases and 36.8 per cent of those hospitalized or put in the ICU and partially vaccinated people make up 4.1 per cent of new cases and 5.3 per cent of those hospitalized or treated in the ICU.

To-date, a total of 250,049 COVID tests have been administered and in the past seven days on average, 4.54 per cent of tests taken have come back positive.