

Ontario begins reopening tomorrow

The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health region just passed the milestone of getting 70 per cent of adults vaccinated with their first dose against COVID-19 and Ontario as a whole is at approximately 75 per cent.

Based on the provincewide vaccination rate and continuing improvements in key public health and health system indicators, the Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, is moving the province into Step One of its Roadmap to Reopen at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, June 11, 2021.

"Thanks to the tremendous efforts of every Ontarian, beginning June 11 we will be able to cautiously lift public health measures in the settings we know are safest," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "While this is exciting news, as we move to enter Step One of Ontario's Roadmap it remains critical that all Ontarians continue to follow public health advice and roll up their sleeves to receive the vaccine."

In order to safely enter Step One of the Roadmap to Reopen, Ontario needed to have vaccinated 60 per cent of adults with at least one dose for two weeks or longer, ensuring the first dose offers a strong level of protection against COVID-19.

As of June 6, 2021 at 8:00 p.m., 72 per cent of the 18+ population in Ontario had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine with over 10 million doses now having been administered.

Before entering Step One, the province also needed to see continued improvement in key public health and health system indicators. During the period of May 25 to 31, 2021, the provincial case rate decreased by 35.1 per cent.

As of June 6, the number of patients with COVID-19 in ICUs is 497, including 31 patients from Manitoba, as compared to 687 two weeks ago.

The province's situation is currently exceeding the best-case scenario presented in recent modelling, which indicated the province would reach below 1,000 new daily infections by June 30, 2021.

Step One of the Roadmap focuses on the resumption of more outdoor activities with smaller crowds where risk of transmission is lower. It will also permit more limited indoor settings to be open, all with restrictions in place.

In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government has amended Step One to also permit indoor religious services, rites and ceremonies, including wedding and funeral services limited to 15 per cent capacity.

Step One of the Roadmap to Reopen includes but is not limited to:

- Outdoor social gatherings and organized public events with up to 10 people;

- Outdoor religious services, rites, or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services, capped at the number of people that can maintain a physical distance of two metres;

- Indoor religious services, rites, or ceremonies, including wedding services and funeral services permitted at up to 15 per cent capacity of the particular room;

- Non-essential retail permitted at 15 per cent capacity, with no restrictions on the goods that can be sold;

- Essential and other select retail permitted at 25 per cent capacity, with no restrictions on the goods that can be sold;

? Outdoor dining with up to four people per table, with exceptions for larger households;

? Outdoor fitness classes, outdoor groups in personal training and outdoor individual/team sport training to be permitted with up to 10 people, among other restrictions;

? Day camps for children permitted to operate in a manner consistent with the safety guidelines for COVID-19 produced by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health;

? Overnight camping at campgrounds and campsites, including Ontario Parks, and short-term rentals;

? Concert venues, theatres and cinemas may open outdoors for the purpose of rehearsing or performing a recorded or broadcasted concert, artistic event, theatrical performance or other performance with no more than 10 performers, among other restrictions;

? Outdoor horse racing tracks and motor speedways permitted to operate without spectators; and

? Outdoor attractions such as zoos, landmarks, historic sites, botanical gardens with capacity and other restrictions.

In addition, to support students who have worked incredibly hard throughout the pandemic, the government is enabling school boards for public and private elementary and high schools to invite students back for brief outdoor end-of-year celebration. Any in-person school year celebrations will need to meet specific requirements.

The province will remain in Step One for at least 21 days to evaluate any impacts on key public health and health system indicators. If at the end of the 21 days the province has vaccinated 70 per cent of adults with one dose and 20 per cent of adults with two doses and there are continued improvements in other key public health and health system indicators, the province will move to Step Two of the Roadmap.

All public health and workplace safety measures currently in place will remain in effect until the province moves to Step One on June 11, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. During this time, the government will continue to work with stakeholders on their reopening plans, including targeted measures for specific sectors, institutions and other settings to ensure that they have full awareness of when they can begin to safely reopen and how.

?While we have reached the point where we can safely move into Step One, now is not the time to get complacent,? said Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health. ?We must all remain vigilant, as the fight against COVID-19 is not over. By continuing to follow public health advice and measures we can continue to reduce transmission, safeguard health system capacity and save lives.?