

Board of Health Meeting February 24, 2022

Summary

PART VIII ONTARIO BUILDING CODE PROGRAM

Since 1998, the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit has been providing services under Part VIII of the Ontario Building Code for 19 of 22 municipalities in Lanark, Leeds and Grenville. These services include: review and approval of applications for septic system permits, installation inspections, file searches, sewage system maintenance inspections, review of subdivision plans and severances. This program is self-funded by fees.

On February 24, 2022, the Board of Health of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit announced that, as of October 1, 2022, the Health Unit will no longer **be able to** provide these services on behalf of 19 municipalities in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark. Health Unit staff will continue working with municipalities to support the transition.

“The Board’s decision will enable the Health Unit to focus on its primary public health mandate, guided by the Ontario Public Health Standards, to promote and protect the health of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark residents, and move towards the recovery phase of the COVID-19 Pandemic,” says Board of Health Chair, Doug Malanka. “The Board of Health values the partnership that the Health Unit has established with our municipalities and their staff through the Part VIII program. We will continue to work together to protect and promote public health.”

COVID-19 UPDATE

- The number of new infections with a positive PCR test continues to decrease since the start of February, along with the number of new hospitalizations.
- Outbreak in health care or congregate settings – Long-term care, retirement homes, group homes, communal living settings have also decreased in February. Health Unit staff have worked closely with these settings to ensure precautions are in place. Residents having a third or fourth dose of the COVID-19 vaccine has provided very good protection against serious infection.
- Several individuals have died from COVID-19 infection, or where it was a contributing factor to the death. They have either been unvaccinated, or were vulnerable to severe COVID-19 infection because of underlying health conditions. This reminds us of how serious COVID-19 infection can be, and the importance for all of us to protect the vulnerable from infection.

- Our public messaging now focuses on “Living Well alongside COVID-19” and encouraging people to eat well, be physically active, get enough sleep, connect with and support others, and getting out and participating in activities that are important to them while using the layers of protection, as appropriate to the situation, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection.
 - Vaccine – For 12 plus 3 doses or 4 doses if immune compromised, 2 doses for 5 to 11 year olds.
 - Mask use for indoor public spaces, and with immune compromised individuals.
 - Stay home when sick, test if available.
 - Wash hands, use hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid crowded spaces, physically distance.

Vaccine Numbers

- For individuals 5 plus, our first dose vaccination rate is 94.3%, and for two doses is 90.9%. LGL continues to lead the province in the proportion of the 5 plus age-group who have received two doses of vaccine which provides very good protection (90%) against serious infection requiring hospitalization.
- The vaccination rate for individuals 5 to 11 is 63.9% with a first dose and 41.3% with a second dose. We are working toward a goal of 70% first doses for individuals 5 to 11 by the March 29th vaccine report.
- Overall, for those 18 plus who are eligible for a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine, the rate is 69.0% - the highest proportion among Ontario Public Health Unit areas. This provides 61% protection against symptoms, and 95% protection against serious infection requiring hospitalization.
- Vaccine appointments have decreased at the fixed sites so the team is focusing on going to where people are with mobile clinics. An RV is being rented to add to the mobile sites during March Break.

REOPENING ONTARIO

- In Ontario, hospitalizations and ICU admissions have decreased steadily since January. This is a key indicator that the province is tracking to determine the need for provincially directed COVID-19 precautions.
- On February, 17, 2022, Regulation 364/20 increased capacity limits on many settings, and also increased social gathering limits both inside and outdoors. On March 1, 2022, further measures were lifted. Three measures are still required - screening for symptoms with a sign outside the locale, masking indoors (unless eating or in a non-public location and physically distanced), and having a Safety Plan outlining how requirements of the Ministry of Labour will be met.

- This is a signal that we are no longer in a critical situation due to COVID-19 infection. Over the past two years we have learned much about the COVID-19 virus and its variants. We now have an effective vaccine with three or four doses, and are all familiar with the precautions we can put in place as individuals, families, and friends, to reduce the risk of becoming infected with the virus and becoming seriously ill. Workplaces, businesses, and organizations can now make decisions about appropriate precautions in their setting to preserve workplace capacity and prevent spread of the virus to clients or members of the public. These precautions extend to all respiratory viruses, including influenza.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

2022 Ontario Public Health Standards Planning – The Management Team is resuming the planning for 2022 OPHS Programs that began in the summer and had to be put on hold while we responded to the new variants Delta and Omicron. We will be conducting Plan-Do-Check-Act assessments with both previous and new programs/services to explore what can stay the same and what can change. We will also be taking a health equity approach building on the Health Equity Assessment Tools we have used in the past.

March Mental Health Month - The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre is sponsoring a March Mental Hygiene Challenge with simple practices one can do every day to support mental health. “It’s a form of preventive maintenance that can be likened to other hygienic practices, such as brushing your teeth, showering routinely, and regularly taking part in physical activity. Through the plasticity of the brain, mental training activities can foster healthy cognitive patterns that are conducive to well-being. As such, mental health experts recommend spending at least 10 minutes a day (all at once or in shorter intervals) on mental hygiene practices such as focused deep breathing and mindfulness, gratitude exercises, journaling and others.” We are assisting in promoting this campaign on social media and on our website with the link to [Mental Hygiene Challenge Landing Page \(mailchi.mp\)](#).