

Media Release

Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Medical Officer of Health Declares Community Emergency with COVID-19

The local medical officer of health is echoing today's announcement by the provincial government to declare an emergency related to COVID-19.

Due to this declaration, the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit's Medical Officer of Health has activated the agency's emergency response plan. This activation prompts local municipalities to set up their own emergency operation centres (EOCs) in order to move supports and resources in place for their communities.

"This is an unprecedented but warranted action for a very challenging time," says Dr. Lynn Noseworthy. "We need to do everything we can to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of our residents."

Due to the provincial declaration, the Health Unit is enforcing the actions put forward last night by the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) for the province, including:

- The closure of all facilities providing recreational programs;
- The closure of public libraries;
- The closure of private schools and licensed child care facilities;
- The closure of all bars and restaurants, with the exception of restaurants that can shift to takeout/delivery mechanisms;
- The closure of all churches and faith settings;
- The closure of all theatres and concert venues

"The health and wellness of our community continues to be our top priority," says Dr. Noseworthy, "and these steps are crucial to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Residents are encouraged to help protect their health by washing their hands thoroughly and frequently, covering their coughs and sneezes, staying home if they are ill, and practising social distancing when out in public by staying at least two metres away from others. As well, anyone returning from travel outside of Canada is required to self-isolate for 14 days and monitor themselves for symptoms unless they are an essential service worker, including health care workers.

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If you think you have 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, visit the Ministry of Health's website to use the self-assessment tool to help determine if you need to seek further care: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-self-assessment>

The Health Unit is continuing to work with its health care partners and municipal partners in this response. Residents are encouraged to visit www.hkpr.on.ca for updated information.

Please see the March 16 media release from Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, Dr. David Williams: <https://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2020/03/enhanced-measures-to-protect-ontarians-from-covid-19.html>

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