

Medical Officer of Health Expands COVID-19 Directives in Response to Ontario State of Emergency

Residents encouraged to “Stay Home, Stay Safe”

On Tuesday, March 17th, the Government of Ontario declared a provincial state of emergency, under 7.0.1 (1) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, in order to limit and slow the spread of COVID-19 in Ontario.

As a result of this declaration and its associated orders, the following establishments in the EOHU region, as well as the rest of the province, are legally required to close immediately:

- All facilities providing indoor recreational programs
- All gyms
- All public libraries
- All private schools
- All licensed childcare centres
- All theatres including those offering live performances of music, dance, and other art forms, as well as cinemas that show movies
- All concert venues
- All bars and nightclubs
- All dine-in restaurants. Businesses that provide food takeout and delivery options are encouraged to continue providing their services to the public, as these options will help limit social interactions between people.
- All organized public events of over fifty people are also prohibited, including parades and events and communal services within places of worship.
- **Note:** The order does not yet apply to public transit, shopping malls, grocery stores or pharmacies.

In addition, Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, Medical Officer of Health, has issued the following directives:

- Churches and places of worship should close.
- Stay/work at home as much as possible and avoid non-essential outings.
- Adults over the age of 70 should not leave their home unless absolutely necessary.
- Avoid non-essential international travel. Residents who have travelled outside of Canada, including to the United States, must self-isolate for 14 days upon their return.

These orders will remain in place **until March 31, 2020**, at which point they will be reassessed and considered for extension, unless they are terminated earlier. Residents should be advised that there is a possibility that the orders may expand, depending on circumstances.

“We’re encouraging everyone to stay home, and stay safe, wherever possible,” says Dr. Roumeliotis. He adds that the above measures will help protect all residents, including those who are most vulnerable. They will also help ensure that healthcare professionals can focus their efforts on those who need it most.

The Eastern Ontario Health Unit is continuing to work with partners at the regional, provincial and federal levels to monitor and respond to this evolving situation.

More information and updates on COVID-19 can be found at the sites below:

- www.EOHU.ca/coronavirus - General information and local updates
- www.Ontario.ca/coronavirus - General information and updates from Ontario's Ministry of Health. Updates on the status of Ontario cases are made daily at 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- www.Canada.ca/coronavirus - General information and national updates
- Follow the Eastern Ontario Health Unit on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#) for local updates.

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