

Outbreak at Chartwell Aurora shows signs of easing as resolved cases top 35



The number of active cases of COVID-19 at Chartwell Aurora (Resthaven) has begun to ease, according to data released this week by the Region of York.

On Tuesday, the Region posted encouraging figures from Chartwell Aurora which is, at press time Aurora's only institutional outbreak of the virus.

By May 26, the long-term care residence was grappling with five active cases and 37 resolved cases of COVID-19, down significantly from 38 active cases on Friday afternoon.

Chartwell Aurora has experienced a total of 53 cases of COVID-19 since their outbreak was declared by the Region in April, with eleven deaths among residents.

Aurora-wide, there were 14 active cases of COVID-19 as of Tuesday with 74 cases marked as resolved. 13 residents, including eleven residents of Chartwell Aurora, have lost their battle with the virus.

The Region reports a total of 101 confirmed Aurora cases since the start of the outbreak. Of these, 53 cases are related to the institutional outbreak, 24 to close contact, 11 to local transmission, 10 to travel and 2 to workplace outbreak. A further single case remains under investigation.

Of Aurora's 101 cumulative cases at press time, 30 are reported amongst people 80 years of age or over, 19 between the ages of 65 and 79, 10 between 45 and 54, eight between 35 and 44, 12 between 20 and 24, 3 between 5 and 19, and just 1 case amongst children 5 and under.

York Region Public Health has also confirmed a case of COVID-19 in a staff member who works at Walmart located at First Commerce Drive and Wellington Street East.

According to Patrick Casey, Director of Corporate Communications for the Region, the individual in question is self-isolating at home.

The individual was not infectious while at work as their symptoms started May 20 and the individual's last day of work was May 17, 2020, Casey told The Auroran. York Region Public Health conducted case and contact tracing activities to identify any other close contacts, including household contacts.

When we receive a notification of a confirmed COVID-19 case, York Region Public Health's case investigation activities start quickly to determine possible source of illness and risk of transmission to other close contacts. We have dedicated teams investigating workplace-related cases to ensure contact tracing is completed as quickly as possible and infection prevention and control measures are/were in place at the business while the individual was working.

York Region Public Health will continue to monitor this workplace to determine if there are any additional cases for 14 days after the last case was identified and, in this situation, monitoring will continue until June 3.

HITTING PAUSE?

On Friday, Dr. Kurji, York Region's Chief Medical Officer of Health, said he was optimistic of trends, stating, Many of our (long-term care and congregate living) outbreaks have come under control, although there are a few that are posing unusual challenges. By Monday, as numbers across York Region and Ontario saw an uptick over the weekend, he was more cautious.

Our downward trajectory of cases seems to have hit a pause button, said Dr. Kurji. When we look more carefully, it appears that the larger number of cases can be attributed to outbreaks in long-term care homes that have still not come under control. In addition, we are seeing an upswing in the number of outbreaks in workplace settings. The number now having gone to over 40.

The two most recent examples of workplace outbreaks in York Region are both in Vaughan, with 21 confirmed cases reported at the UPS plant on Steeles Avenue West and Aluminum Window Designs. 21 confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported among UPS workers at the start of the week, two of whom live in York Region. Aluminum Window Designs is experiencing 26 confirmed cases, none of whom live in the Region.

A THANKS TO CHARTWELL STAFF

On Wednesday, frontline workers at Chartwell Aurora

received a welcome visit from members of the Aurora Lions Club who provided meals to the heroes working day and night to keep senior residents safe during the emergency.

The Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF), the charity arm of Lions Club International have donated almost \$4 million USD as a response to the COVID-19 outbreak, said Aurora Lion Jim Bondy. District A-16, which includes an area bordered by Halliburton to Oshawa and Markham to Keswick, has received a \$10,000 USD Grant for support of frontline workers at long-term care facilities that have been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 virus.

The Executive of the District have divided this amount into the four Regions. Region 18, which includes Aurora to Stouffville and Markham to Maple, has been making deliveries of food, snacks, fruit and beverages to frontline workers at a number of long-term care facilities. We appreciate the dedication and efforts of all frontline and essential workers everywhere.

By Brock Weir