

More than 200 cases of COVID-19 seen in Aurora since start of pandemic

More than 200 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Aurora since the start of the global pandemic.

Aurora passed this grim milestone over Thanksgiving weekend, with York Region as a whole surpassing more than 5,000 confirmed cases of the virus.

By Tuesday, October 13, York Region Public Health reported 204 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within Aurora, with 19 cases remaining active. 170 cases are now marked as resolved, with 15 cases proving fatal.

By press time, there were two open institutional outbreaks in the community, both at retirement and long-term care residences.

At Sunrise Aurora on Golf Links Drive, 5 residents and 8 caregivers have tested positive for the virus in their outbreak. Chartwell Aurora (formerly Resthaven) on Mill Street, which is experiencing its third outbreak, reported 1 positive case amongst its healthcare worker population and, at press time, zero cases among residents.

On the school front, St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School is 'under surveillance' for COVID-19. Schools under surveillance are those with a laboratory-confirmed case of the virus among staff, students and visitors where there is currently no evidence of transmission within the school. There is one such case at St. Max.

16 of Aurora's 19 active cases are attributed to local transmission, two to institutional outbreak, and 1 to a workplace cluster.

Region-wide, there have been 5,088 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 540 of which remain active. 4,289 cases are now marked as resolved and there have been 259 deaths attributed to the virus.

There were 502 new cases of COVID-19 reported in York Region between October 5 and October 12, but despite these rising numbers, the Region did not make the cut of Ontario municipalities taken back down to a 'modified' Stage 2 by Queen's Park.

Toronto, Peel and Ottawa were placed back into a modified Stage 2 of the Government's plan to re-open Ontario effective this past Saturday for a minimum of 28 days. There, the limits on all social gatherings were limited to a maximum of 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors where physical distancing can be maintained. Indoor food and drink services, including bars, have been prohibited, and indoor gyms, cinemas, and arts venues, among other businesses and services, have been forced to close.

'Our cases in York Region are definitely increasing,' said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Chief Medical Officer of Health, on Monday. 'Just last week, we had almost 450 cases reported to us. Most of these cases happen to be in the under-40 age group, particularly the 20-29 age group. However, the cases are also occurring in more vulnerable groups: those that are over the age of 30, particularly the elderly.'

'As we see more cases in the community, we see cases transition into schools, into workplaces, and into our long-term care homes, so the time is here for us to do everything possible to pull back on our social contacts, on our close contacts, and we need to get back to the basics: avoid close contacts with anyone other than your household members; maintain physical distancing of two metres or more; where physical distancing can't be maintained, wear masks, particularly where it is legislated, and wash your hands frequently.'

By Brock Weir Editor/Local Journalism Initiative Reporter