

More than 30 Aurorans now lost to COVID-19

More than 30 Aurora residents have now lost their battle with COVID-19.

The community passed this grim milestone on Wednesday with three more fatalities at Willows Estate Long Term Care in Aurora's south end.

Between January 13 and January 20, York Region Public Health has reported the deaths of nine residents at the resident.

An 86-year-old woman lost her battle with COVID at the residence on Thursday, January 7, after first being diagnosed with the virus on January 4. On Sunday, January 10, a 77-year-old man succumbed after receiving test results on January 4. A 90-year-old woman, who also received positive test results on January 4, lost her battle on January 11.

Two further deaths ? an 88-year-old man and a 74-year-old woman lost their lives on January 14 and, the following day, an 86-year-old woman succumbed.

As reported on Wednesday, a 75-year-old male resident of the home lost his battle on Saturday, January 16 after receiving a positive test on January 7. Two residents succumbed on January 19 ? one, a 94-year-old woman who first tested positive on January 3, three days before experiencing symptoms, and a 78-year-old woman who tested positive on January 16, a day after the first symptoms.

But, as the outbreak continues at Willows Estate and a newly-reported outbreak at Chartwell Hollandview Trail remains ongoing, Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Chief Medical Officer of Health, says the rate of new cases across York Region is showing signs of slowing but the emergence of the UK COVID variant is a cause for concern.

?Our case numbers have been declining slightly thanks to all your help,? said Dr. Kurji on Monday. ?We are now slightly lower than the incidence figures for Toronto, however we do have the variant in our midst. The UK variant has been found in seven of our residents. In three of them, there was no connection to travel and, therefore there is community transmission going on.

?With such high numbers in the community, it is important that we try and trace expeditiously the close contacts of cases and make sure that they are self-isolating as well. To that effect, we need your assistance. When we send you texts, we would like you to complete the questionnaires as fully as you can. Even if you complete them partially, they are still useful for us. It enables our case managers to very quickly get in touch with the close contacts.

?The most important safeguard for us is to continue to stay at home and not mix with anybody other than our immediate household. The stay-at-home order, which is in effect until February 11, requires you to stay at home and only go out for essential visits such as to the pharmacist, grocery shopping or your healthcare provider. Certainly, we do encourage you to go out for exercise, as fresh air is good for you and we don't want you to get too mentally isolated.?

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter