

94-year-old man first Auroran to lose COVID battle since June

A 94-year-old man is the first Aurora resident to lose their battle with COVID-19 since June 9.

The man was a resident of Chartwell Park Place, which is currently in an active outbreak situation.

An active outbreak at the Yonge Street residence, formerly Park Place Manor, was first reported by York Region Public Health on November 11 with two cases among its caregiver complement of 40.

By press time this week, there were 11 confirmed cases of the virus among the 65 residents and 4 among caregivers and staff.

Aurora, as of December 1, has seen a total of 371 cases of the virus, 27 of which remain active.

328 cases are now marked as resolved with the late Chartwell Park Place resident bringing fatalities to 16.

His death was the first of an Aurora resident in this second wave of the virus, the day after the Region logged a record of new cases in a single day: 251 on Sunday, November 29. The last victim, an 85-year-old woman who was a resident of Chartwell Aurora lost the battle after a long hospitalization.

“Our cases in York Region had been plateauing until the weekend when we saw quite a jump in the numbers of cases and we don't know exactly what is responsible for this jump and we're investigating,” said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Medical Officer of Health, in his weekly update on Monday.

The latest death comes as York Region cracks down on gatherings as new cases of the virus continue to rise.

In the lead-up to and aftermath of Black Friday, York Region conducted a COVID-19 enforcement blitz, which resulted more than 1,000 visits to businesses across York Region to monitor compliance with public safety measures resulting from York being moved into Ontario's Red (Control) Zone.

Throughout the weekend, officers from York's COVID-19 task force focused on malls, big box stores, restaurants, fitness centres and other public spaces to ensure public health measures were being followed.

One Aurora business, Exclusive Fades on Yonge Street near Wellington, faces charges under the Reopening Ontario Act.

“Most businesses across York Region are adhering to COVID-19 safety measures and protocols, however there is an increasing number of complaints from the public about overcrowding in malls, big box and retail stores,” said the Region. “Businesses failing to keep their customers and employees safe by not adhering to the mandated COVID-19 safety measures will be subject to fines. Repeat offenders could face temporary closure.”

Added Dr. Kurji: “York Regional Council had made the commitment of enforcement of the guidelines on York Region residents as well as businesses. As a result, we have the COVID-19 enforcement task force that has been very busy over the weekend having laid some 32 charges following 867 inspections as well as 1,151 compliance education activities. Fines can be laid even under the Reopening Ontario Safe Act or can be laid under the Health Promotion and Protection Act. The latter can be as many as \$25,000 for a corporation.

“When it comes to people coming to York Region from the lockdown zones, the Province generally advises them not to move from one zone to another. We in York Region have incidence rates that are similar to those of Toronto's, although Peel's incidence rates are higher. Therefore, we have taken the position that whilst people are supposed to stay home and only come out for essential shopping, if they do come here we want to make sure that everybody is kept safe. As a result, over the weekend previously, we had

issued a Section 22 order requiring malls and retail outlets to ensure appropriate physical distancing and line management. By doing so, we have strived to keep people safe. However, with the holiday shopping season being here, we urge you first to stay home as much as possible, only to go out for essential trips, see if you can actually get your shopping done online from the local stores. If you can't and you have to visit one of the stores, please visit them at off-peak hours and try and minimize the time you would spend at the malls or in stores and observe the directional arrows in the stores as well as the physical distancing requirement of two metres or more.?

Chartwell Park Place is currently Aurora's only open institutional outbreak of COVID-19.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter