

Province invests \$30 million to support Region's COVID recovery



York Region Public Health's continued response to COVID-19 has received a significant boost from the Provincial Government.

On January 31 at the Region of York's headquarters in Newmarket, Newmarket-Aurora MPP Dawn Gallagher Murphy, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health, announced a one-time \$30 million grant to York Region's Public Health Unit.

The money will help York Region continue its vaccination clinics and perform case and contact management, while ensuring that services unrelated to COVID get back to pre-pandemic levels.

"Our government is very grateful for the world-class services you provide and especially for everything you have done throughout the COVID-19 pandemic," said Gallagher Murphy, addressing the Public Health Team, including Dr. Barry Pakes, York Region's Medical Officer of Health. "I am pleased to announce our government is investing over \$30 million in additional one-time funding to support York Region Public Health with the extraordinary costs incurred while working to prevent, monitor, detect and contain COVID-19 in the Region.

"This funding will help York Region partners continue to respond to COVID-19 while ensuring critical public health services are available to all, where and when they need them. This funding is part of our government's investment of over \$170 million in additional funding to support 24 public health units across Ontario to help ensure that COVID-19 vaccine delivery remains available for every Ontarian who wants to be vaccinated and to also ensure public health units have the resources they need to support and respond to COVID-19 and any future variants."

Also among the York Region Members of Provincial Parliament to speak at the announcement was Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa, who gave his thanks for the work of York Region Public Health.

"I want to thank every single one of you on the frontlines, those who do administrative work, [Pakes] for your leadership during a very difficult chapter, every single leader who is sitting here in the front who led by example during an incredibly challenging time," Parsa told the audience, which included Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas, Newmarket Mayor John Taylor, Richmond Hill Mayor David West, East Gwillimbury Mayor Virginia Hackson, and Georgina Mayor Margaret Quirk. "A lot of uncertainty, a lot of unknowns. Your leadership that you provided was the calm that we needed. To everybody on the frontlines, please convey our gratitude."

According to York Regional Chair Wayne Emmerson, since the start of COVID, York Region Public Health has delivered more than 2.5 million vaccines, a show of the Region "remaining steadfast and committed" to protecting the community.

"These efforts have helped reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the communities and they ensure our residents have the protection they need to avoid serious outcomes related to the virus," said Emmerson. "Today's funding announcement, over \$30 million in

York Region will continue our COVID-19 vaccine efforts while also returning our public health programs and services to pre-pandemic levels.

?Through your support, we're better positioned to build the resilience of the public health offerings and will be better prepared to respond to future health emergency. We will also be able to better connect residents with the care they need when they need it and, in turn, take some pressure off the acute healthcare system.?

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