

## Region focuses on contact tracing as COVID-19 numbers trend downward

As the rate of new cases of COVID-19 within York Region is showing an encouraging downward trend, the Region of York continues to ramp up its contract tracing efforts to stop the spread.

Over the past weekend, Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Medical Officer of Health, said the Public Health department had carried out follow-ups with more than 200 individuals.

“Whilst we have collectively made tremendous progress in bringing down the incidents of COVID-19 in York Region, I do wish to stress that COVID-19 hasn't disappeared from our communities,” he said. “For example, over the weekend, we had to follow up on 200 contacts. These were low-risk contacts as a result of different cases. So, this emphasizes the importance of maintaining physical distancing and good hand hygiene principles as we have to consider almost everybody else as potentially infectious. In addition, should someone have symptoms of COVID-19, mild though they might be, it is important that you seek out testing through the three assessment centres at our hospitals and they are open seven days a week. It is only through this testing that you would know whether you had COVID-19 or not, and we would know that you had COVID-19 and be able to follow up on your contacts.

“Past experience has taught us that knowing the diagnosis of COVID-19 is important to individuals as sometimes the individuals react very badly to the infection.”

Here in Aurora, there were 7 active cases of COVID-19 within the community as of August 11, the first time in two weeks that cases had been back in the single digits.

6 of these cases were related to local transmission or close contact, with the one remaining case linked to an institutional outbreak outside Aurora.

Since the start of the pandemic, Aurora has seen a total of 141 confirmed cases of COVID-19, 15 of which have proved fatal. 119 cases are now marked as recovered.

There have been a total of 3,332 cases of the virus across York Region, 229 of which remain active. There have been 2,851 recoveries in York Region and 252 deaths related to COVID-19.

**By Brock Weir**