



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ontario Health Team of Northumberland urges continued vigilance in personal preventive measures against COVID-19 as reopening plans progress

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY – Thursday, July 9, 2020 –As COVID-19 restrictions continue to lift across Ontario and more local businesses and community services cautiously reopen to the public, Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) partners are reminding residents of the importance of remaining vigilant in taking preventive measures to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

“As we progress with Phase 2 of the provincial reopening plan, more businesses and services in our community are becoming available to the public. While the temptation with these reduced restrictions is to relax our efforts against this virus, infectious disease experts continue to reinforce that this would be premature,” says Linda Davis, spokesperson for the OHT-N. “It has been inspiring to see everyone in Northumberland doing their part to tackle this unprecedented health care emergency. We have met the challenge of COVID-19 as a community and this collective effort is achieving results: the number of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases locally remains low and, most importantly, we have had no deaths.

This virus continues to actively circulate, and we each have a shared responsibility to do everything within our power to sustain our current low number of cases. OHT-N partners therefore strongly encourage community members to continue diligently following public health recommendations to limit the potential for spread of COVID-19 in Northumberland as local reopening plans are implemented.”

Taking precautionary measures is the best way to continue to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The OHT-N encourages Northumberland residents and visitors to:

- 1) Practice good hand hygiene:** Clean your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just washed your hands.
- 2) Maintain physical distancing:** Don't give the virus a chance to spread. Keep a minimum distance of two metres (six feet) from other people outside of your immediate social circle.
- 3) Limit your social circle:** Carefully observe provincial recommendations for limiting your household's social circle to no more than 10 people, including the members of your household.
- 4) Stay home if you are ill.**

OHT-N partners **also strongly endorse the July 7 order issued by Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDU) Medical Officer of Health Dr. Lynn Noseworthy requiring non-medical masks or face coverings in commercial establishments in Northumberland.** Effective July 13, this requirement builds on recommendations from federal and provincial health authorities urging Canadians to wear non-medical face masks or face coverings in public spaces, especially when physical distancing may be a challenge. Face masks or coverings minimize the spread of infection when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Under the HKPRDU order, owners and operators of local commercial establishments must create policies requiring people to wear a non-medical face mask or face covering when on their premises. This includes establishments such as malls, retail stores, convenience stores, restaurants, personal service settings, grocery stores, bakeries, gas stations, indoor farmers' markets, and areas of mechanics' shops/garages/repair shops which are open to the public. [Learn more](#) about this order from HKPR District Health Unit.

In June, the OHT-N issued a call for sewing volunteers to produce and donate reusable cloth masks for distribution to local health and social care patients/clients, to encourage local use and help preserve medical grade surgical masks for healthcare and frontline use. A sincere thank you to all who have contributed to this campaign to date. Donations continue to be accepted. [Learn more](#) about how to donate to this ongoing effort. These cloth masks are being distributed to residents as supply permits.

For information on how to put on, remove and clean a non-medical face mask, see the Health Canada recommendations [here](#).

For the most up-to-date provincial information on COVID-19, including symptoms and the status of cases in the province, visit [Ontario's dedicated COVID-19 website](#). For local updates, visit the [HKPR District Health Unit website](#).

About the OHT-N

Drawing on a strong history of collaboration, patients, caregivers, health and social care providers from across Northumberland County are working together to improve patient and caregiver experience of health care in our community, as well as provider work-life experience, through the Ontario Health Team (OHT) model.

On December 6, 2019, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Christine Elliott visited the Colborne Emergency Services Base to announce the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) as one of the first 24 OHT candidates in the province. The OHT-N is now moving forward with implementing this new model of organizing and delivering health care, better connecting local patients and health care providers in order to improve patient outcomes. COVID-19 has provided an unexpected opportunity to capitalize on these partnerships.

For more information please visit the OHT-N website, [OHTNorthumberland.ca](#), email the team care of info@ohtnorthumberland.ca or reach out by phone care of the contacts below.

Media contacts:

Jennifer Gillard

Senior Director, Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships
Northumberland Hills Hospital
905-377-7757
jgillard@nhh.ca

Kate Campbell

Director, Communications
Northumberland County

905-372-3329, ext. 2335

campbellk@northumberlandcounty.ca