

Community Update – August 10, 2020

Emerging Wisely Current State: Relaxing Phase 2 – Next Steps

The Hammer and Dance

Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, issued the following statement on Sunday:

"There have been 119,221 cases of COVID-19 in Canada, including 8,976 deaths. 87% of people have now recovered. Labs across Canada have tested 4,404,038 people for COVID-19 to date. Over the past week, an average of 48,360 people were tested daily, with 1% testing positive and an average of approximately 400 cases were reported daily from across the country.

The continuing efforts and sacrifices of Canadians have enabled us to flatten the curve of COVID-19, bringing the spread of the novel coronavirus under manageable control in Canada. This has allowed us to protect our healthcare system, while at the same time we have increased capacity in hospitals and across our public health and laboratory systems to maintain epidemic control going forward. Our efforts have also bought us time as research and science accelerate at an unprecedented pace towards finding safe and effective vaccines.

Informed by mathematical modelling, a recommended approach to controlling the COVID-19 pandemic involved an initial phase of strong public health measures—including closures—to interrupt exponential growth of the epidemic that threatened to overwhelm the health system. Following this, is a longer phase of less restrictive public health measures aimed at keeping COVID-19 under manageable control, while we cautiously reopen social and economic spaces. This overall approach has been popularly described as the "Hammer and the Dance". In Canada, we've controlled the epidemic with the "hammer" and now it's time for the dance to keep the infection rate down, until a safe and effective vaccine or treatment is available to bring COVID-19 under widespread and lasting control.

As I have said before, the virus doesn't care about our past efforts. **It's what we do now that matters.** We've come too far, lost too much, and have so much to protect. **Our biggest struggle is to persevere with our collective effort, to maintain the careful balance of keeping the infection rate low (the dance), protecting the most vulnerable, while minimizing the unintended health and social consequences of restrictive public health measures (the hammer).**

We can all do our part to maintain this balance by increasing our knowledge of high-risk settings to avoid, and what precautions to take to reduce the risk of infection and spreading the virus. Take some time this Sunday to read my backgrounder, available [here](#), with key information and resources that will help us learn the dance moves for keeping COVID-19 under control and ensuring that we can all continue to do things we enjoy.

Don't lose hope, keep on dancing and being part of the solution."