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MPP - Newmarket-Aurora

Aurora Chamber of Commerce – Government and Advocacy Update

January 11, 2021



To the Members of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce,

I would like to wish each of you a happy and healthy New Year. Though the start of 2021 may look a little different, I am inspired by the spirit and resilience of our community as residents and businesses continue to come together to support one another.

Now more than ever, it is critically important, that all Ontarians continue to follow public health and workplace safety measures to protect our communities and most vulnerable populations, and stop the spread of COVID-19.

In response to the alarming and continuous rise in COVID-19 cases across the province, Ontario entered a Provincewide Shutdown on December 26, 2020 until at least January 23, 2021. The impacts of these time-limited measures will be evaluated throughout the 28 days to determine if it is safe to lift any restrictions or if they need to be extended. This difficult, but necessary decision was made by the Government of Ontario, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, to help stop the trend of high COVID-19 transmission in communities, preserve health system capacity, safeguard vulnerable populations and those who care for them, and save lives.

The government recognizes that businesses impacted by these necessary public health measures require additional support so they can continue serving their communities and employing people in Ontario once the COVID-19 pandemic is over. The new **Ontario Small Business Support Grant** will provide a minimum of \$10,000 and up to \$20,000 to eligible small business owners to help navigate this challenging period. More information on this new grant will be available later this month. Visit **Ontario.ca/smallbusiness** to learn about the supports available to small businesses and **Ontario.ca/covidsupport** for the supports available to businesses of all sizes.

I want to reassure you and our community that despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. With the arrival of two Health Canada-approved COVID-19 vaccines, Ontario has entered a critical new stage in the fight against COVID-19.

On December 14, 2020, Ontarians watched as the very first COVID-19 vaccine doses were administered to frontline health care workers. Since then, the province has continued to rollout Phase One of its three-phase vaccine implementation plan. During Phase One, limited doses of the vaccines will be available to health care workers, essential caregivers, long-term care home and retirement home residents, and First Nation communities and urban Indigenous populations.

The COVID-19 vaccines remind us that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and that light grows brighter with every dose administered to Ontarians across the province. However, Ontario's vaccine supply will arrive in stages. In order to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our communities, we need to continue to follow public health advice. This includes staying at home as much as possible to minimize transmission of the virus and prevent hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. Trips outside of the home should be limited to necessities such as food, medication, medical appointments, or supporting vulnerable community members. As we await the arrival of more vaccines, continuing to follow public health advice is our best defence against COVID-19.

An estimated two million vaccine doses are expected to arrive throughout the winter during Phase One of Ontario's vaccine implementation plan. As of January 9th, over 100,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to Ontarians across the province. All residents, health care workers and essential caregivers

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at long-term care homes in priority regions, including York Region, will receive a COVID-19 vaccination by January 21, 2021. For more information on COVID-19 vaccines and Ontario's three-phase immunization program, as well as daily updates on the number of Ontarians vaccinated, please visit Ontario.ca/covidvaccines.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Region's Paramedic Services, and the partners of the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team for collaborating on a very Canadian solution to vaccinate our health care workers. As some of you may have heard, on January 6th, Southlake Regional Health Centre partnered with York Region Public Health and the Town of Newmarket to turn the arena at the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex into a COVID-19 vaccination centre. Together with the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team, York Region's Paramedic Services and staff at other nearby hospitals, the team is able to vaccinate 1,000 people per day with the potential to expand operations. The men and women of Southlake Regional Health Centre, the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team and York Region's Paramedic Services represent the best of our community and continue to make us proud of their heroic actions and incredible contributions every day.

As we look forward to the many opportunities 2021 will bring, I am encouraged by the resilience of our community and the commitment of residents and businesses to support and protect one another. Thank you for continuing to do your part in the fight against COVID-19. We will get through this together. I wish you all the best this new year.

Sincerely,



Christine Elliott, MPP for Newmarket-Aurora

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