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The Spread of COVID-19 Pre- and Post- Winter Lockdown in Ontario Workplaces & Schools

Toronto— The Ontario Health Coalition released its new report today tracking the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces, schools and childcare prior to the stricter lockdown and since, as well as the spread of the virus in the general population, [The Spread of COVID-19 Pre- and Post- Winter Lockdown in Ontario Workplaces & Schools](#). It finds that COVID-19 cases among the general population increased more in January than in December, a very disturbing finding, but it includes cases in early January that likely developed from transmission of the virus prior to the stricter lockdown on December 26. On the other hand, it appears that public health measures have been somewhat effective in curtailing the spread of COVID-19 in workplace settings with closures.

For the four weeks from December 5 – January 2:

- COVID-19 cases in the general population increased 50.43%
- COVID-19 cases tied to workplace outbreaks (outside of health care) increased 47.85%.

For the four weeks from January 2 to January 30:

- COVID-19 cases in the general population increased 75.07%
- COVID-19 cases associated with workplace outbreaks (outside of health care) increased 44.29%.

From December 5 to January 2, the industries which saw the highest growth in COVID-19 cases were:

- Retail (138%)
- Corrections (116%)
- Education (ranging from 59%-105%) Note: these are just the numbers associated with what the province has defined as a school outbreak, not all school cases which are calculated below.
- COVID-19 cases in the general population grew 50% during that same period.

Since the lockdown started December 26, virtually all of these cases would be associated with pre-lockdown contagion.

From January 2 to January 30, the industries which saw the highest growth in COVID-19 cases were:

- Corrections (152%)
- Education (Post-Secondary 67%)
- Childcare (64%)
- Congregate care (other) (65%) NB: this excludes shelters, group homes, corrections & short-term accommodations.
- Retail (62%)
- Food processing (43.5%).

During the same period, cases in the general population dramatically increased (75%).

The highest growth has been in industries that did not shut down. In particular, we see an alarming growth in the spread of COVID-19 in Correctional facilities. The spread of the virus in Childcare grew consistently throughout the lockdown and into January. Conversely, the growth in Retail slowed considerably and became less than the spread of the virus in the general population in January. The spread in Education also slowed. Though case totals are less than the general population growth, there have been significant outbreaks in Food Processing. We have seen some increase in school cases and outbreaks since schools implemented a staggered reopening from January 10 to February 16.