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For Immediate Release

Attn: Assignment Editor

## **Huge Jump in COVID-19 Cases in Schools and Child Care, Increase in Workplace Outbreaks: Health Coalition Releases Updated Tracking of the Virus Spread in Non-Health Care Industries**

Toronto – Since June, the Ontario Health Coalition has been tracking COVID-19 outbreaks in non-health care industries, adding to its regular updates on the spread of the virus in health care settings. Both sets of reports are available on the Coalition's website [here](#).

In the most recent period (end of August to current) including all reporting that the Coalition has been able to find up to Wednesday September 23, the following trends are emerging:

- In our research for this update, we found 162 active outbreaks in non-health care workplaces (including schools and child care centres) as of September 22 as compared to 87 active outbreaks as of August 29 2020. The number of outbreaks in non-health care workplaces has almost doubled since the end of August.
- The number of cases in schools has risen by more than 521 percent in the last week and in daycares it has risen by 142 percent. In the last week, the first clear in-school transmissions of the virus have been reported. We have included cases that are not being reported by the province of Ontario (cases in administrative staff and private schools) and an explanatory note about the way in which Public Health Ontario is defining school outbreaks, which is different than how outbreaks in long-term care and retirement homes have been defined.
- Since the end of August, we found that the rate of increase in agricultural workers has slowed with only nine new cases reported. However, our members working with migrant workers have reported that there has not been any testing at the farms in Windsor-Essex in two months and many workers cannot access testing.
- We have found additional information about workplace outbreaks prior to the end of August as well as new outbreaks from the current reporting period, August 25 to September 18 that are included below.
- We have summarized new information (with sources) about the working conditions that resulted in the spread of COVID-19 in some of the workplaces.
- The number of workplace outbreaks in this period may be underreported due to high wait times at assessment centres where they have seen a huge increase in demand since schools reopened. These high wait times may be discouraging people from getting tested and are also slowing test results as the province's labs are overwhelmed.