



December 3, 2020

## By No Measure are they Under Control: Large Outbreaks of COVID-19 in Long-Term Care, Hospitals, Retirement Homes Escalating Sharply- New Tracking Report

Toronto -- The number of large COVID-19 outbreaks in health care settings is escalating sharply reports the Ontario Health Coalition. Despite the rhetoric by political leaders minimizing the spread of COVID-19 in recent weeks, the Coalition's new tracking report shows alarming numbers infected in the spread of the virus through large outbreaks (>10 residents/patients/staff infected) in hospitals, long-term care and retirement homes from November 17 to December 1 and can be found here: <https://www.ontariohealthcoalition.ca/index.php/report-tracking-the-spread-of-covid-19-sharp-escalation-in-large-covid-19-outbreaks-in-health-care-settings-data-updated-to-december-1/>

Calculated from data reported by local Public Health Units and Ontario Public Health the numbers are escalating by every measure:

- The number of large outbreaks has increased significantly.
- The size of the large outbreaks has also increased significantly.
- The geographic dispersion of the large outbreaks has also spread significantly: large outbreaks have spread from border to border across southern Ontario, into Simcoe Muskoka, and the first large outbreak is now happening in Thunder Bay.

Total currently active health care outbreaks (long-term care, retirement homes and hospitals) is 213. This includes all outbreaks, the ones that are large and the ones that are currently small. The breakdown is: 117 LTC; 42 hospital; 54 RH.

The Coalition's report released today shows the growth of each of the 64 currently active large outbreaks in health care settings. Two weeks ago, on November 18, the Ontario Health Coalition found 49 active large outbreaks. Large currently active outbreaks (>10 staff/residents/patients infected) November 17 – December 1:

- 45 long-term care homes
- 2 hospitals with 8 outbreaks
- 17 retirement homes

64 total.

As of December 2, the total number of residents and patients infected in just the currently active large outbreaks in health care settings is 2,369, and the number of staff is 1,257 for a total of 3,626. With great sadness we report that 381 of those residents and patients have died.

**Quote:** "These are huge numbers and they capture only the currently active large outbreaks in health care. Most of these currently large outbreaks only started in late October or the beginning of November," said Natalie Mehra, executive director of the Ontario Health Coalition. "These numbers represent thousands of human beings whose lives are threatened by COVID-19 and they underline the fact that the measures being taken to improve infection control and care in those facilities are not adequate to stop the spread of the virus."

**Growth in the number of people infected in long-term care 2<sup>nd</sup> wave:** At the end of August there were there were 3 currently active cases among long-term care residents and 18 currently active cases among long-term care staff. Using

Public Health Ontario's daily epidemiologic reports, from September 1 to November 17 the cumulative number had increased by 2,424 (1,920 residents and 504 staff). From November 17 to December 1 the cumulative number has increased to 3,462 (2,737 residents and 725 staff). This is an increase of 1,038 cases in two weeks, or 30.0%.

**Growth in the number of active long-term care outbreaks:**

- As of December 1 there are 118 active outbreaks in Ontario's long-term care homes.
- As of November 17 there were 100 active long-term care outbreaks.
- As of October 31 there were 76 active long-term care outbreaks.
- As of September 30 there were 42 active long-term care outbreaks.
- As of September 1 there were 18 active long-term care outbreaks.

**Growth in the size of the active long-term care outbreaks:**

There continue to be more large outbreaks each period of several weeks that we measure, and the severity of those outbreaks is continuing to increase as shown in the numbers below. Of the current Ontario long-term care home outbreaks (December 1):

- 45 outbreaks include more than 10 residents and staff infected;
- 20 outbreaks include more than 50 residents and staff infected;
- 10 outbreaks include more than 99 residents and staff infected;
- 5 outbreaks include more than 150 residents and staff infected;
- 1 outbreak includes more than 200 residents and staff infected.

By comparison, the large outbreaks as at November 17 were as follows:

- 34 outbreaks included more than 10 residents and staff infected;
- 13 outbreaks included more than 50 residents and staff infected;
- 12 outbreaks included more than 99 residents and staff infected;
- 4 outbreaks included more than 150 residents and staff infected.

**Geographic spread of the long-term care outbreaks:** Long-term care outbreaks which were concentrated in Ottawa at the beginning of the second wave (in September) have now spread across the province. The Coalition has now tracked second wave large outbreaks in: Toronto, Halton, Simcoe Muskoka, Niagara, Eastern Ontario, York, Hamilton, Peel, Windsor, Brant County, Huron Perth, London, Durham, and most recently Thunder Bay, which was nearly untouched by COVID-19 in the first wave. Notably, Halton and Eastern Ontario have now seen more large outbreaks in the second wave than they did in the first wave.

**Hospitals:** On November 18, the Coalition reported five hospitals with large outbreaks that had 10 outbreaks among them (if the number of cumulative cases from all outbreaks occurring at the same hospital equal ten or more, the Coalition does not count that hospital in the large outbreaks tracking). As of December 1 a number of these outbreaks were resolved. Although both CAMH in Toronto and The Ottawa Hospital still have outbreaks, they each add up to less than 10 cases and are therefore not counted in this report's tracking of large outbreaks.

As of December 2, there are two hospitals with large outbreaks as defined as ten or more patients and staff infected. London Health Sciences Centre's University Hospital had its second outbreak (the only active one at the time) start on November 10, and had its third outbreak start on November 11. The cumulative cases are now reported as 48 patients including 7 deaths and 35 staff members for a total of 83 people infected. The Scarborough Health Network in Toronto had its fifth COVID-19 outbreak start October 27, and since then has had 8 more outbreaks, with 6 of them active as of December 1.