

MEDIA STATEMENT**Ontario Hospital Association Warns Ontario is Losing Ground in the Fight Against COVID-19**

TORONTO - September 13, 2020 – As the province experiences a steady upward trend in the number of COVID-19 cases, the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) reminds all Ontarians of the importance of personal responsibility and sticking with the public health measures that are essential to saving lives and preventing a second wave of this deadly pandemic.

Thanks to the sacrifice and responsible actions of millions of Ontarians, the province experienced a low number of COVID-19 cases through much of the summer. Unfortunately, Ontario's COVID-19 reproduction rate is now over 1 and the spread of infection is accelerating. Daily case growth is now over 200, a clear warning sign that our hard-won progress is slipping away. It is the responsibility of each of us to take steps immediately to halt this alarming trend.

It has been a long six months, and fatigue around public health protocols and restrictions is a reality for some. Other people may have been lulled into a false sense of security by lower cases counts and the re-opening of the economy. Make no mistake, COVID-19 is still a very real threat. Without continued vigilance, today's isolated outbreaks in Toronto, Peel, York and Ottawa could easily spread throughout communities right across Ontario. If current trends continue to accelerate, economic restrictions may tighten once more, and the school year for our children will be in jeopardy.

On behalf of Ontario's hospitals – the anchor of Ontario's pandemic response and the last line of defence in the long war against COVID-19 - we implore the people of Ontario to strictly adhere to the public health measures that helped bring wave one under control and allowed Ontario to re-open its economy. All Ontarians must continue to wash their hands frequently, practice physical distancing, wear masks when required, stay home when they are sick, and neither host nor attend unsafe gatherings and parties.

For months, Ontario's hospital workers have worked selflessly to fight COVID-19. Let's not allow their sacrifices to be wasted or ask them to work again under extraordinarily demanding conditions. Thousands of people were denied access to hospital care when elective procedures were shut down in March. Let's stay vigilant so that hospitals can catch up on the backlog and ensure that people get access to the health services they need.

We are all in this together and our collective success depends on each of us making the right choices. Ultimately, skipping a dinner party or a wedding that isn't safe is a very small sacrifice to make to protect our loved ones and people who are particularly vulnerable to the threat of COVID-19. Our message from March 21st remains relevant today. Ultimately it is up to the many to protect the lives of the few.

- Anthony Dale, President and CEO, Ontario Hospital Association

For media inquiries, please contact Amanda Philp, Director of Public Affairs, Ontario Hospital Association, at aphilp@oha.com.

MEDIA STATEMENT

Ontario Hospital Association

The Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) is the voice of the province's public hospitals. The OHA serves hospitals through advocacy, learning and engagement, labour relations and data and analytics to build a better health system. We do this by conducting evidence-based research, proposing ideas, convening members and partners, and encouraging responsible dialogue about change.