

MEDIA RELEASE:

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

April 3, 2020

Province orders public gatherings to be of 5 or less people

On March 28, 2020 the Provincial Order made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act was amended. The amendments strengthen the order issued on March 17, 2020 to include the prohibition of "organized public events including parades, events including weddings, social gatherings and communal services within places of worship". It prohibits gatherings of more than 5 people.

Physically distancing ourselves right now is critical in controlling the spread of COVID-19 and will keep our loved ones healthy. Premier Ford said during his daily press conference on April 1, 2020 "We know a surge is coming (referring to COVID-19). The hard truth is, right now, today, there is very little separating what we will face here in Ontario from the devastation we've seen in Italy and Spain. Thousands of lives are at stake. The actions we take today, what we do as a government and as a people, will determine what we face tomorrow."

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit recognizes that faith communities provide support during difficult times; however drawing people together either inside or outdoors increases the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Significant religious holidays are quickly approaching and often these are accompanied by practices, ceremonies, rituals, and celebratory gatherings. The provincial order **does** include these in the prohibition of organized public events. Activities such as Easter meals, egg hunts and ceremonies cannot take place; these types of activities encourage social gatherings. Community meals providing food to our vulnerable populations may continue on a takeout and delivery basis provided they have received Health Unit approval.

Getting out for a walk is completely acceptable at this time (as long as you are not under quarantine or self-isolation due to illness or exposure). Fresh air and exercise will help your body manage stress. Be sure to keep your distance from others (2m/6ft) and don't forget to do a tick check. Warmer days are upon us and ticks are active; this may increase the risk of contracting Lyme disease.

For more information, visit the Health Unit website at www.healthunit.org or call 1-800-660-5853 or connect with LGLHealthUnit on Facebook and Twitter.