

March 17, 2021

## Health Unit Issues Class Order for Perth and Smiths Falls

# MEDIA RELEASE

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

### Health Unit Issues Class Order for Perth and Smiths Falls in Response to Increase of COVID-19 in West Lanark County

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit has detected a significant increase of COVID-19 in West Lanark County with 36 active cases in the communities of Perth, Smiths Falls, Tay Valley and Lanark Highlands – most cases are in Smiths Falls and Perth. Public health has contacted individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their close contacts to provide guidance about self-isolation and testing. The Health Unit has also worked with the Perth Curling Club where members who participated in recreational games, social gatherings and/or meetings between March 5-12 have been instructed to self-isolate and COVID-19 testing has been arranged for these individuals.

This increase in active cases in West Lanark County has affected local businesses, recreational sports facilities, schools and families. The Health Unit has observed inconsistent mask use and close environments (where a distance of 2 metres between individuals is not being maintained) as factors that are contributing to the spread of COVID-19 in local workplaces. As well some individuals with COVID-19 are going to work with mild symptoms and infecting other co-workers. Infection is also spread through close contact in households and with social gatherings, and from there to schools and other workplaces. Some people with COVID-19 are asymptomatic so they are spreading COVID-19 without knowing it. This emphasizes how critical it is that everyone considers that others may have COVID-19 and use public health measures – be COVID-19 SMART.

Sports facilities, workplaces, organizations, and businesses can review the provincial requirements, including the requirement to have a COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan, on the Health Unit's website: <https://healthunit.org/health-information/covid-19/business-re-opening/>

In response to the increase in COVID-19 cases in West Lanark County, Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health at the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit has issued a Class Order pursuant to Section 22 of the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990.

"The purpose of this Class Order is to help contain the community outbreak of COVID-19 that is occurring in the western portion of Lanark County," explains Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health. "This Class Order will reduce opportunities for people to gather and have close unprotected contact with others outside their household in public and private facilities."

This class order effective from 12:01 a.m. on March 17, 2021 until rescinded by the Health Unit is issued to owners and operators of public and private facilities that operate in the **Town of Smiths Falls, and the Town of Perth** where the public may gather, including but not limited to: indoor sports venues, places of worship, banquet halls, wedding venues, clubs and or organizations that may have meeting facilities that can be rented to the public.

In accordance with this order:

- Sports facilities must close and cease operations, including curling rinks, privately owned arenas, and indoor sports venues that offer facilities for sports such as soccer, lacrosse, tennis, squash, pickle ball, etc.
- Facilities operated by clubs and organizations must cease rentals for private social gatherings and group activities.

- Places of Worship may operate in accordance with the requirements of 364/20 with additional restrictions related to social events in their meeting spaces.
- Banquet halls and wedding venues may operate in accordance with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 364/20, and only events that are hosted, organized, and managed by the venue are permitted, with additional restrictions.
- Dining and Drinking Establishments may operate in accordance with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 364/20 with additional restrictions.

Any failure to comply with this Class Order can result in fines of up to \$5000 for every day or part of each day on which the offence occurs or continues.

The Class Order is posted on the Health Unit website, <https://healthunit.org/coronavirus/> along with the most up to date information on COVID-19. You can also call 1-800-660-5853 and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @LGLHealthunit for information.