

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Moderator (00:00:01):

Hello everyone. And welcome to the City of Burlington's Telephone Town Hall Meeting. We are live this evening with your mayor, Marianne Meed Ward. In addition, we are joined by 1000s of residents from across the city listening in. To ask a question live this evening, simply press three on your phone's keypad. Once again, press three to ask a live question at any time. My name is Eric, and I'll be the moderator of the town hall today. During this live telephone town hall, we encourage you to get involved and to ask questions. The mayor, council and the City of Burlington leadership team chose this format as this is an interactive town hall with you, which means they and tonight's panelists all want to hear from you. They have made it a priority to engage and connect with you and fellow residents with important updates on how the City of Burlington is moving forward and navigating the increase in COVID-19 cases, the province is experiencing.

Moderator (00:00:54):

Our intention is to get as many questions from you as possible. You can ask a live question at any time by pressing three on your phone keypad. At that time, someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. Now, we're still having new people join us. I do want to welcome everyone to the City of Burlington's Telephone Town Hall Meeting. We are live this evening with your mayor, Marianne Meed Ward. In addition, we are joined by 1000s of residents from across the city listening in. Another quick reminder, if you have a live question, we want to hear from you this evening, simply press three on your phone's keypad, and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. Now, at this time, I'm going to introduce Mayor Meed Ward so she can open up the town hall. Mayor Meed Ward, please go ahead.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:01:39):

Thank you so much, moderator, and welcome to everybody who is joining us again tonight for this, our last public telephone town hall of 2020. Hard to believe, but we're heading to the back end of this year, and it's our sixth in a series that have taken place in Burlington since the pandemic began earlier this year. So while Burlington's numbers of new COVID-19 infections remain low, we certainly have seen the numbers increase in recent weeks in other areas of Halton, including Oakville and Milton. And that's why we were moved into the red zone by the province on Monday. I'm sure we'll have some questions about that. And we certainly have our panelists who are ready to answer anything that you might want to talk about with that. It is clear though that we can't let our guard down.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:02:28):

We have to remain vigilant in physical distancing, wearing masks, hand-washing, limiting our contact to people who are outside of our households and limiting activities to essential activities. We are all in this together and our health, our economy and hospital capacities are all interdependent, not just across Halton, but of course, throughout Ontario. So tonight we're going to focus on how we can work together to ensure that we keep Burlington's numbers low. We're going to answer your questions about recent federal and provincial announcements. What's happening at our hospital. What's happening with city services and recreation activities. And we've got representatives on our always stellar panel to take your questions. So joining me tonight as live panelists, we have Eric Vandewall, the President and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital. We have Dr. Dale Kalina, Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Control at Joseph Brant Hospital.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:03:27):

We have our city manager for the City of Burlington, Tim Commisso. We have Allan Magi, Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services at the city. Chris Glenn, our Recreation Services Director at the city. We have Ken Audziss from MPP Jane McKenna's office joining us this evening. And hopefully she may be able to join us later tonight herself. And we have the Honorable Karina Gould, our member of parliament for Burlington who will also be joining the call a little later. So I will be directing questions to folks as they come up. And I really want to thank each of them for making time once again, this evening to be here for our community and provide the information and answers that people are looking for in this challenging time. We do have a number of members of council who are also listening intently on the line. And I want to thank them for joining the call.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:04:23):

We have Councillor Kelvin Galbraith, Councillor Lisa Kearns, Councillor Rory Nisan, Councillor Shawna Stolte, Councillor Paul Sharman and Councillor Angelo Bentivegna, listening into your questions and the answers. And I know there are a lot of them out there, and so we're going to get right to it so that we can get as many as we can. So I am going to turn things back to our moderator, so we can keep moving along.

Moderator (00:04:48):

Sounds good, mayor. We do have our first live question coming up. Just a quick reminder to everyone joining us, if you have a live question you'd like to ask, you can press three on your phone keypad at any time, and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. Up first, we have James who's joining us live. James, welcome. Please go ahead.

James (00:05:07):

Yes. I like to know exactly, what's the difference between phase one, phase two, phase three and those zones that are blown into red zone?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:05:21):

Great question. I know that there will be a lot of people listening for that. James, thank you so much for asking that. So I am going to turn that over to Ken from MPP Jane McKenna's office, as those categories are provincial regulation. And so I'm going to turn it over to you, Ken.

Ken (00:05:40):

Thank you mayor. So there were stage one and there was stage two, a modified stage two and stage three. Those were the previous stages prior to the new COVID-19 response framework that the province has put out. So replacing that old framework, we now have five levels of public health measures. There is a green stage called prevent, a yellow level called protect, an orange level called restrict. The red level is called control and that's where Halton Region currently is. And then there's the gray level, which is lockdown. On the Ontario government website. And there will be a link on MPP McKenna's website, janemckennampp.ca. There will be very simple and clear details that describe what each level of the framework is and what is, and is not allowed. So just to be clear, the old stage one, stage two, modified stage two and stage three have now been replaced by the five levels of this framework.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:06:48):

Thank you so much, Ken, that's very, very helpful. And there's also additional information and links to a lot of the Ontario information that's online on my webpage at mariannemeedward.ca. So yeah, you can check there as well. Ready for the next question, moderator.

Moderator (00:07:09):

We have another live question coming up in just a second. We're actually going to do our first survey question of the event. So you can use your touch-tone phone to indicate your response on this question. We want to know during the pandemic, where are you getting most of your information regarding the City of Burlington? If it is the Burlington Post, press one. If it is the city's website, press two. If it is through social media, press three. And if it is via the mayor and council's e-newsletters, press four. So again, during the pandemic, where are you getting most of your information regarding the City of Burlington? If it is the Burlington Post, press one. If it is the city's website, press two. If it is through social media, press three. If it is via the mayor and council e-newsletters, press four. Up next, we have a live question from Carrie. Carrie, you're joining us live, please go ahead.

Moderator (00:08:05):

Hi Carrie. You're joining us live. Yeah. Hi, please go ahead.

Carrie (00:08:08):

Oh, great. I just want to know what's the plan for kids sports. I know minister Lecce today said that there would be no extra closure down at Christmas time. Because the spread amongst the kids community is so very low and that's provincially. Obviously, the numbers are much, much lower here in our city. And I know that there's a lot of mental health issues on the rise with COVID and lock downs. And you know, the fact so much has been taken from the kids. I just want to ensure that if the kids can go to school, that they're still going to be able to go and practice their sports over the winter. I know personally, my son sports is his avenue after school. That's his goal. So school is important, but sports is probably even more important for his future. So I just need to know that he's going to be able to continue to work this winter and practice what his next career move is going to be.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:09:20):

Thank you so much for the question, Carrie. We certainly have heard from many, many parents and groups about the importance of recreational activities and would certainly consider that one of the essentials to make sure that people engage safely in those things. The good news is that sports is allowed with restrictions. So I'm going to turn that... I think this is a two-part answer. I'm going to turn it over to Chris Glenn, who's our Director of Recreation Services here at the city who can speak to what's happening in city facilities and in the areas that we permit for third party groups. And then I'm going to turn it back over to Ken for any additional comments around what it means to be in the red zone and what that means for sports and recreation. So Chris, over to you first.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Chris Glenn (00:10:08):

Thank you very much mayor. And thank you Carrie, for the question. As mentioned by mayor, we certainly want to continue to have people be active and engaged in a safe manner while we go through the pandemic and keep people and their personal wellbeing top of mind. With respect to where we are right now in the red zone, there are some restrictions that we have in terms of ability to do certain activities in our facilities. We are restricted right now to having 10 people maximum to utilize indoor spaces or rooms and 25 people maximum in the outdoor settings. With respect to sports specifically, what we're being asked to do is that people can go and practice their sports in those groups of 10. So it could be 10 people on an arena floor, or ice pad and they can practice their skills. But we're asking that people continue to maintain the physical distancing and they're not to be engaged in team sport, play or scrimmaging at this point in time.

Chris Glenn (00:11:04):

So it's practices only at this point. We've been working with our user groups who use the space to provide those types of programs. And they're looking to modify the types of activities that they can provide through their teams, etc. And they're working closely with their coaches and whatnot to come up with creative ways, to continue to have people get involved with their sports. So that's what we're doing with sports right now under the red zone. And I'll pass it back to the mayor and possibly on to Ken.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:11:31):

Thanks so much, Chris. And yes, Ken, anything you'd like to add on that topic?

Ken (00:11:37):

Thank you mayor. So a few things, first of all, Carrie is correct. Earlier today the minister of education did indicate that in consultation with the chief medical officer of health and the public health measures table, that there will not be an extended winter break this year. There was talk earlier in the week that there could be, kids after the Christmas holiday spending the first couple of weeks in January, learning from home. But that has been confirmed not to be the case. So kids based on what we know today and where we're at with the numbers, with COVID-19, kids will be resuming school in January, right after Christmas. Now, in terms of the red zone, there is some information. So under the red zone, we talk about general public health measures, there's details for restaurants and bars, etc, as well as for meetings and events spaces.

Ken (00:12:37):

Of course, there are also details listed for sports and recreational fitness facilities. And so for gyms and fitness studios, which we hear a lot about, 10 people are allowed indoors for classes or 25 people outdoors for classes as Chris had mentioned. 10 people are allowed indoors where there's areas with weights and exercise equipment. In terms of facilities overall, there is a maximum of 50 people per facility in all combined recreation fitness spaces or programs that are allowed. So in an arena as an example, a total of 50 people in that facility. So there is obviously no contact permitted for team or individual sports and no spectators of course, with the exemption of parents or guardians there to watch. But certainly we hear you Carrie and mental health is important. Children do need sports. They do need to socialize even beyond school and they do need to release some of that pent up energy being in class or working online.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Ken (00:13:45):

So certainly working with Halton Region and the City of Burlington, we are certainly working to ensure that, that remains possible. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:13:54):

Thanks so much. Moderator we're ready for the next question.

Moderator (00:13:59):

Up next, we have another live question again, a quick reminder to everyone joining us. We do want to hear from you. You can press three on your phone keypad and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. So you'll have a chance to ask a lot of questions. Up next is Jackie, who's joining us now. Jackie, welcome, please go ahead.

Jackie (00:14:18):

Thank you very much for this opportunity. And Mayor Ward, I compliment you on doing this live discussion group for all of us in Burlington. My question has to do with Joseph Brant Hospital. How is it preparing or has it prepared to deal with COVID-19 going through this second wave that we're coming into as compared to the first wave?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:14:44):

Excellent question. And I'm thrilled that you've joined us, Jackie. It's a great way for us to reach a lot of households all at once. So I'm glad you find it useful too. We sure do. Eric, maybe I'll ask you to answer that and Dale may have some additional thoughts. So Eric Vandewall, our President and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital, will take that question first. Go ahead.

Eric Vandewall (00:15:07):

Hi Jackie. Thanks very much for your question. I only caught a part of it, but I'm assuming that you were wanting to get an update as to the readiness and the preparedness of the hospital in terms of the second wave. Could I just confirm that with you?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:15:19):

It is. How is the hospital preparing for a second wave of COVID and potential new patients?

Eric Vandewall (00:15:25):

Okay, very good. So this wave is very different than the first wave. And as you recall in wave one, we essentially deferred a lot of scheduled care surgeries and clinics, etc, so that we can create as much capacity as possible to care for what we thought at that time was going to be a fairly significant spike in COVID positive patients. And so our occupancy in wave one was down to 50% of the hospital being occupied and 50% being available for COVID-19 patients. The second wave was very different because as we know, there was a significant deferral of surgical cases and other scheduled care that we've now since reinstated and try to catch up basically and address the backlog of those deferred cases. So today we're essentially operating at about 95% occupancy. Having said that, we do have a very robust plan in place, Jackie, and it includes the ability to surge.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Eric Vandewall (00:16:24):

And so we do have conventional inpatient hospital spaces available that we can surge into should we need to, for COVID-19 positive patients. And as you may be aware, we do have the pandemic response unit as well, which is our field hospital that's located on the premises. And that will allow us to surge into an additional 73 beds that are specifically designed to care for COVID moderate to mild patients who would typically stay with us for 48 to 72 hours. And then either return home or return home with supports. We're involved in a number of other activities as well as a hospital. And so we are involved in supporting long-term care in congregate settings, should they require our assistance for infection prevention, control advice. Should they require some staffing support. We continue to provide our tests and service at our assessment center. So that service is now essentially same day booking and almost the same day testing and results in 24 hours later.

Eric Vandewall (00:17:27):

So all of that to say, I think we have a very good plan in place. However, it's only as good as everybody following the measures that have been put into place. And so Burlington has done a great job in Halton so far and being very responsive to following the measures. And that allows us to have capacity available because we don't have significant prevalence of COVID in the community. So I hope that answers your question, Jackie. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:17:51):

Thanks for that, Eric. And there was a recent announcement about some additional funding for beds at Joseph Brant as well. Does that factor into the readiness mix?

Eric Vandewall (00:18:00):

Yes, it does. A great point Mayor Meed Ward. So we did receive provincial support and funding for an additional 40 transitional care beds. And this has really to do with caring for patients who no longer require acute care and are waiting for transfer to long-term care. However, as we know there are a lot of limitations in place right now on transfers to long-term care homes, from a safety perspective for the residents and those entering long-term care. So patients aren't able to transfer as quickly. So we're taking care of those patients in the meantime with those 40 new beds. And we also received funding support for four intensive care unit beds in addition to our current compliment of over 20. And so that's very helpful in terms of supporting our fall preparedness pandemic plan.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:18:47):

Thanks so much. And I will give Dr. Dale Kalina, who's the Medical Director of Infection Prevention and Control at Joseph Brant Hospital a chance to speak to what preparedness from an infection prevention. So you have COVID patients coming in, you have an assessment center there, what are the measures that the hospital is taking to look after the people who come in and once they're there?

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:19:11):

Thanks Mayor Meed Ward. And thanks Jackie for the question. I think it's highlighted a lot of important points. I think one of the biggest differences between the first wave and the second wave, in addition to what Eric already said, really is in what we know about the disease itself. So we have learnt a lot through publications and through journal articles and research across the world and experiences that we've all had in terms of how to care for these patients. So one of the things that we're seeing is that patients that are coming into the hospital on average have a shorter length of stay. We know a lot more about what therapy. So in terms of things like

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

oxygen that they might need or intubation to help them breathe, or even some medications like steroids. We know when to give certain treatments and how to use them effectively.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:20:02):

And then at the same time to answer your question Mayor Meed Ward, Infection Prevention and Control has also learned a lot. Not only at Joseph Brant Hospital, in terms of the ways that we're seeing the disease being spread, still primarily, we know it is from droplet. But knowing what is important in terms of cleaning, in terms of appropriate distancing. And then also in terms of appropriate use of masks, both cloth masks and hospital-based masks. So in summary, I think we've learned a lot. There's a few differences in terms of how we treat the disease, but also certainly a lot of new ways that we're able to help prevent the spread of infection as well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:20:41):

Thank you so much, very helpful. And we are ready for our next question moderator.

Moderator (00:20:49):

Up next we're going to go to another live question. Just another quick reminder to everyone. If you'd like to ask a live question, press three on your phone keypad. We're going now to Ben who is joining us live. Ben, welcome.

Ben (00:21:03):

Thank you very much. And thank you Mayor Meed Ward for having these calls. Understand mayor, my assumptions are that commercial taxes are down and therefore the coffers of the city might be a little bit dry. And I believe we have to have a balanced budget. So looking forward to the next fiscal year, do you see a large property tax increase for residential or do you see a decline in services? And again, thank you for taking my call.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:21:32):

Thank you, Ben. That is a really good one. And I'm going to bring in our city manager, Tim Commisso to speak to that, but we have had some recent updates around the council table on the budget. And so we are looking to keep it at a reasonable rate once you blend it with the regions taxes, close to what inflation would be. And we're delivering services in a new way. So we're really hoping not to cut services. And in fact, we have some areas where we want to enhance our service to the community and where we actually need to in light of the pandemic. So it will be an interesting discussion. And of course, we have requested, municipalities have requested funding from the province because our revenues have gone down and our costs have gone up like everywhere.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:22:26):

And we were the recipient of some significant relief from the province. We're very grateful to that. And we've asked for a second tranche under a new funding package. So we hope to get some funding for next year, which will also present some relief on our taxpayers. And just to speak to the part of the question dealing with commercial taxes being down, the property rate, the properties taxes has not changed. But we have allowed people to defer or delay their payments without penalty or interest. So we know that over half of the people who have applied for that have been commercial businesses. So we know that, that relief is welcome, but at some point they will pay us. But we've just given a bit of a pause because we know how much they're struggling.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:23:17):

So Tim, over to you for any additional comments around what our budget is looking like this year.

Tim Commisso (00:23:24):

Thank you mayor. And Ben, I just want to say that, that's a great question given where we are on our timing. I think Marianne you've covered it well, so I won't repeat anything you've said, but maybe just to provide a bit of numbers in terms of what the impact of COVID has been. So in 2020, the impact has been about \$18.5 million reduced revenues that we've had to cover in order that the taxpayer is not burdened anymore. I think we're positioned ourselves well. We did receive with federal support back in August. So, we're hopeful and we've applied for further sort of phase two funding

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Tim Commisso (00:24:03):

that we can offset that fully for this year. And of course we have to have a balanced budget next year. So we're anticipating impact is roughly about half of what we've seen this year. So somewhere in the range of about \$8.5 to \$9 million, and we're working on how do we deal with that and we're hopeful that we can become part again of an advocacy for some further funding. What we'll do when we present the budget, I think is we'll separate for council, what our regular sort of ongoing budget is, in terms of continuing to provide our services, and then what the COVID impact is. We'll need a strategy for that, the COVID impact. But to your question, I think the news covered off generally what we're looking at and that's to try to get back to sort of inflation when we bring our budget with the regions as well, in terms of the overall tax rate change.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:25:04):

Great. Thanks for that. And, and just one final addition. Just today, I wrote on behalf of the city and in partnership with our Team Burlington Folks, and that's our tourism, chamber, economic development and our two business associations downtown, as well as Aldershot, wrote to the Minister of Finance, Rod Phillips, at the province to first of all, thank them for all the support they've provided both the city and businesses, but also to reinforce our asks for some additional things to help our businesses and also to help us financially. So, we've put that right on their radar and are reasonably confident that we will get some relief from the province as a result of those efforts. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator (00:25:55):

And, we have another question ready to go coming up from Pauline who's joining us live now. Pauline welcome, please go ahead.

Pauline (00:26:01):

Oh, hi. Thank you for taking my call and thank you mayor for doing the excellent job that you are doing. I would like to ask, I know that we're part of the province of Ontario and I would make sure that I would try to look after not only my own Burlington neighbors, but everybody, but the only problem I see or wonder why we can't be a little bit more accurate. We talk about numbers. If the numbers in Burlington are down and I do believe that we have done a terrific job. I know there's lots of places that are upscale in Burlington that I used to go to. If you try to stay in your own bubble, meaning the bubble around your place for groceries or whatever, I just find that the fines that they give out in Toronto, which is a big area would maybe they need to be charged more,

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

or maybe they need to be given the old-fashioned paper on your front door if your family is not doing what they're supposed to be doing throughout this COVID. But I'm wondering how we can get into the red zone compared to Toronto.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:27:25):

Well, Pauline, thank you so much for that question. I hear that one an awful lot, and I really appreciate that. Thank you for your kind words and, thank you. As you said, Burlington is doing amazing. You all on this call, our whole community, is just doing awesome in terms of following the guidelines and the rules. There are both legislated as well as recommended actions. And throughout this pandemic, we have been lower per capita than anywhere else in the GTHA but we're surrounded by red. We're surrounded by the hot zones, and we're also part of a public health unit. So I'm going to ask if Ken from Jane McKenna's office can speak to perhaps or maybe Dale can from the hospital, why the decisions are made at a public health unit level as opposed to an individual city level.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:28:24):

So Burlington of course, is part of the Halton region, public health unit, which includes ourselves, Halton Hills, whose numbers are also quite low, and Milton, and Oakville. It's the four municipalities and the indicators then are Halton region wide. That's why we are in the red zone because we're in that public health unit. So Ken maybe you can give us some insights into why it's important to look at those indicators on a public health unit level, as opposed to a city level. If there's anything, Dr. Kalina, you'd like to add to that as well. Go ahead, Ken.

Ken (00:29:03):

Thank you, Mayor. Thank you so much for the question. First and foremost, the way that Ontario is responding to COVID-19 is based on our public health unit boundaries. And there are 35 public health units right across Ontario, and of course, Burlington part of Halton region. That's what lands us into Halton region. And you're absolutely right when you watch the news and you hear what's happening in Toronto, and with all of the media provincially being centralized in Toronto, what happens in Toronto tends to sort of overtake what's happening everywhere else. That's why the province has allowed, in addition to our measures, being really looked at by the public health regions, the 35 regions across Ontario. In addition to that, the local municipality, Burlington, the regional municipality, Halton, also has the ability on what's going on in the community to impose or to make other recommendations, to help ensure that we lower the spread.

Ken (00:30:06):

Now, when you go back to April 12th, and that was sort of when we were all really getting into COVID-19, that was the highest day. The highest number of cases, on April 12th, were reported as 44 and the seven day rolling average back then, on April 12th, was 22.14. Now, if we fast forward to November 16th, just two days ago, we had reported 59 cases that day on the Halton region website and our rolling average was up to 55. On April 12th, when there was an entire lockdown in Ontario and right across the country, we were at 22.14 over a seven day rolling average. Two days ago, we were at 55. Now, obviously we know a lot more about COVID-19 today than we did on April 12th, but we also know that our Halton public health is also responsible here for contact tracing. That's one of the really important measures that we have in tracking where COVID-19 is, where outbreaks can happen, where they are happening, and what additional measures need to be sort of put in place.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Ken (00:31:19):

That's why we rely so much on Hamidah Meghani, who is the Halton Medical Officer of Health here to provide that local perspective. And I know that she and her team work very hard to do what they're doing to provide the updated numbers. Dr. Meghani also reports to Dr. David Williams, who's Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. Halton found itself in the red region, in the red zone or red control level of the new framework in large part, because again, our Halton Chief Medical Officer of Health, looking at what was going on here, looking at the pressures they were facing, really strongly recommended the need to adapt that level. The numbers that I mentioned, the rolling average really supported her recommendation.

Ken (00:32:15):

Back to you, Mayor.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:32:17):

Thank you so much, Ken. Dr. Kalina, did you want to add anything to that conversation around why we do this at a public health unit level rather than an individual city level?

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:32:29):

Sure. I'd be very happy to. So Pauline, I think that's a great question. To reiterate, I'm very proud of what we've been able to accomplish here in Burlington. To be very clear, in Burlington, about two or three weeks ago, we actually were very much the average of what we were seeing in Halton region. It's nice to see that all of our residents in Burlington have been able to kind of heat the call and respond as well as we all have to be able to reduce our local numbers. But, the reality is we're part of our community and not just the hospital, but our healthcare systems are all integrated together. Being able to look out for ourselves here in Burlington also means that we need to be able to look out for people in the rest of our community. I think one of the comparisons you drew was to how Toronto is responding and how they're also in a, in a red zone as well.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:33:21):

But I think it's also important to recognize that the Medical Officer of Health, Dr. De Villa, in Toronto has also implemented some broader measures as well, that are above and beyond what we have here in Halton. It really does speak to the level of transmission. I'm not honestly as interested in kind of what zone we're in and what color we're in. I think we're always going to need to be able to look after one another and that's by doing things like washing our hands, by only going out to places in a safe way. For right now, it really just is for essential services and continuing to do things like wear masks and only socialize within our own households right now. I think that's the reality of where we are.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:34:10):

Thank you so much. I appreciate you offering that doctor and we are ready for our next question, moderator.

Moderator (00:34:17):

Well, we have another live question coming up in a moment. I do also want to welcome some new people who are joining us on the City of Burlington's telephone town hall meeting this evening. We're live this evening with your Mayor Marianne Meed Ward. In addition, we are joined by thousands of residents from across the city, listening in. We're taking live questions. If you have a live question you'd like to ask, you can press three on your

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

phone's keypad at any time. Someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. You'll have a chance to ask a live question. Up next, we actually have a question that we received via text message. And the question is why is the city allowing outdoor patio dining in the winter if the patio is completely enclosed with heating? How is this different from indoor dining?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:35:03):

Well, that is a great question. I know Allan who's our executive director, Allan Magi of Capitol Works, who has carriage of everything related to patios and whatnot. I can tell you the short answer is if there's an enclosed tent, we would treat it as inside space. It actually extends your inside outside, but kind of back inside. But Allan, over to you to talk about the regulations, the permitting process around those outside patio tents, and what the rules are. Go ahead, Allan.

Allan Magi (00:35:40):

Okay. Thank you very much. The tents are obviously to provide additional indoor space and provide for additional separation of the people that are visiting the restaurant. We do have a rigorous program in terms of reviewing those applications. They do need to conform to any building code requirements. For those tents that extend onto the public right of way, we are reviewing each of those to ensure that we can continue with our maintenance operation in particularly winter control maintenance. That's something that we're looking at very carefully to ensure that it's safe, both for the snowplow operators, for the traveling public, both in vehicles and pedestrians, and also that those people that are in the enclosed tents and that are safe from any snow and ice that maybe moved towards those enclosed facilities.

Allan Magi (00:36:55):

In short, it's trying to find a balance to provide additional indoor space for the restaurant so that they can continue to operate and that they can operate in a safe manner with additional separation for the patrons and at the same time allow for our operations and the general public to continue with their mobility through the winter.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:37:22):

That's great. Thanks, Allan and I will add that the council also waived, well, we set up a grant program to reimburse the fees of those permits, should restaurants wish to have the enclosed outdoor patio. Not everyone does. For those hearty wolves that are going down that path, we've provided some relief there as well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:37:44):

Moderator, we are ready for the next question.

Moderator (00:37:46):

We have another live question ready to go. Stuart is joining us now. Stuart. Welcome, please go ahead.

Stuart (00:37:54):

Thank you very much and thank you mayor for providing this format. It is much appreciated in these crazy times. My question is twofold. Number one, what is the metric that it is looked at that will take us from red to gray? And my second part of the question is, are you, as Mayor able for Burlington or perhaps the mayors of Halton, able to determine a movement towards gray that doesn't take us to gray, but adds the safety of red? I hope I've made myself clear.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:38:25):

Well, you know your colors Stuart. Well done.

Stuart (00:38:26):

I just learned them tonight.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:38:32):

Well, Ken did a great job earlier from MPP McKenna's office to outline that. It is a really good question. I will actually turn it right back over to Ken, because that is a question that I often get. We certainly know what the metrics are that placed us into red. I'll let Ken speak to what might get us to gray. Your question around what can the Halton mayors do as people on the call will know, most of the decision-making around the pandemic and the regulations is at the provincial level or in part of the public health unit. The medical officer of health has some powers. But, we certainly have the power of our voices and advocacy. And so we, as Halton mayors, several weeks ago, joined with MPP McKenna to really request of all of the decision-makers that any decision to add restrictions, or lift restrictions, or have a modified gray, or a gray light, if there is such a thing. But, all those decisions be based on health indicators that are transparent and understood and that would be based on the best decisions for people's health.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:39:53):

I've been really pleased to see the new framework actually does those things. That's all good news. We may not have legislative authority, but we certainly have the power of our voices coming together, and that's been effective throughout this pandemic. We'll continue to do that on your behalf, but Ken, over to you about what might take us to gray and if there's variations of gray.

Ken (00:40:21):

Thank you mayor. First and foremost, across the four levels before you hit the lockdown level, which is the maximum measure for any public health region in Ontario, there are really three key measures that we're looking at. The first is epidemiology. The second is health system capacity, so our hospital and our ICU capacity, which Joseph Brant can speak to about where they're at now. And finally, there's public health system capacity and that's the capacity for our local public health unit to deal with case and contact management. In terms of epidemiology, the weekly incident rate, which is the seven day rolling average for control is greater than or equal to 40 per a hundred thousand. To get to lockdown, obviously, that number needs to continue to worsen even after control measures have been put in place. If you take a look at November 6th, we reported on that day 65 cases on November 16th, 59, our seven day rolling average on November 6th was 50.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Ken (00:41:34):

And it's 55 as of two days ago. In terms of the percent positivity of our tests to enter into the control rate, it's just over 2.5%. The lockdown measure obviously would be higher than that, around the 3% level, which is considered by public health to be very concerning. Obviously, the other thing would be repeated outbreaks in multiple sectors or setting, and a number of large outbreaks, which we haven't seen here in Burlington or Halton region, a number of large outbreaks in multiple sectors or settings. And then, of course, the level of community transmission, sort of non epidemiology linked cases are increasing. Again, at this point in time, we haven't seen that. To go from control to lock down, the real key thing is that the trends are continuing to worsen. So even after the control and the more stringent measures have been applied, that things continue to get worse. Maybe I'll turn that over to Joseph Brant, perhaps to speak about what's going on in the hospital in the ICU.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:42:47):

Certainly go ahead, Dr. Kalina.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:42:51):

Sure. Thank you mayor. And thank you, Ken, for that update as well. I completely agree. The different thresholds are largely based on what essentially is happening in the community, so how many tests are positive and how many people have the infection. To speak to what the hospital's like, in the control category, it does note that the hospital and the ICU capacity are at risk of being overwhelmed. I think that that's a reality of every hospital, including our own in the GTA.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:43:24):

Every hospital right now, and that contrast quite dramatically with that first wave, where everybody was closer to kind of 50-60% capacity. That's just not the reality that we're seeing right now for hospitals, because we are able to keep up with our regular daily scheduled kind of programming. But the threshold that are set right now are really looking at whether in the control zone or where we are right now, whether the numbers start to improve and start to get better with the controls that are in place or whether more stringent measures are needed. I think that there's always, as the mayor has mentioned already, there's always a conversation that is going on between healthcare providers, the medical officers of health, Dr. Meghani and all leaders in the community to ensure that the community is kept safe and that we have the resources to continue to operate at the hospital and at a healthcare level.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:44:23):

That's great. Thank you both for that. Very comprehensive. Moderator, we're ready for our next question.

Moderator (00:44:30):

Well, up next, we have a live question. But first, a quick reminder to everyone joining us. If you have a live question you would like to ask, press three on your phone's keypad and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. Again, press three. If you have a live question, you'd like to ask. Up next, we have Brent who is joining us live now. Brent, welcome.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Brent (00:44:51):

Yeah, I have a question. How do we differentiate flu symptoms and COVID symptoms, because they're very similar?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:45:05):

Oh, that's a great question. Dr. Kalina will be on the hotspot again for that one. Over to you, doctor.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:45:12):

Thanks mayor. And thank you, Brent. That is a very tough question. That's really one of the important things to identify in this time as well. So if you do have cold or flu like symptoms, so a runny nose, a sore throat, fevers, chills, and fatigue, it really could be a cold or a flu, or it could also be COVID. And I think that it's always important to recognize that if you have any of these symptoms, you really should get tested. You should also isolate yourself from other people as much as you can. Also, you shouldn't be going out in public if you have those symptoms. Now that doesn't differ, whether it's COVID or a cold, because you wouldn't want to transmit a cold either. Some of the things that we can all do to be able to help differentiate from those is: A, get your flu shot.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:46:07):

Flu shots are available through almost all pharmacies and family physicians offices, and they're always being released in batches from public health as well. So, that's number one. Number two is really to get tested. When you come to the assessment center at Joseph Brant Hospital, like all assessment centers in Halton and around the province, you'll be given a test rate. Now, if you're symptomatic, not just for the COVID, but also for colds and flu viruses as well. Then, the last thing to do is of course, continue to monitor your own symptoms, symptoms of people that are surrounding you, and always ensure you wash your hands, wear a mask, and stay far away from other people.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:46:52):

That's great. Thanks for that. We're ready for our next question.

Moderator (00:46:57):

Up next, we're going to do a quick survey question for everyone joining us. You can use your touch-tone phone to indicate your response. We want to know how comfortable are you with taking part in a virtual or online public meeting. If you are very comfortable, press one. If you are somewhat comfortable, press two. And, if you are not at all comfortable, press three. So again, how comfortable are you with taking part in virtual or online public meeting? If you are very comfortable, press one. If you are somewhat comfortable, press two. If you are not at all comfortable, press three. And now we have a live question from Donna. Donna, welcome. Please go ahead.

Donna (00:47:40):

Hi. Thank you mayor so much for having these town hall meetings. I really, really appreciate that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:47:48):

You're very welcome. I'm glad you could join us.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Donna (00:47:51):

Thank you. Now, I'm a staffing coordinator for a long-term care facility. My basic concern is what are we doing about the

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

Donna (00:48:04):

shortage that we have in staffing? I did work in Burloak and I do realize now they're an outbreak and I work in a Halton facility. We're short-staffed, my staff are so overworked. They're so tired. I bless them so much because they do so much but we can only go so far and how can we get more staff on? We've exhausted all of our things to do. We have agencies trying to work with us and we're desperate.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:48:50):

Well, I can hear that exhaustion and frustration and concern in your voice Donna. And first we all want to truly thank all of your staff on the front lines of this and doing it tirelessly to keep everybody safe. And we are so grateful for your service. And I'm going to turn this over to Ken from MPP McKenna's office as the funding and some of those decisions would be probably at the regional level but also at the provincial level. So maybe Ken, can you speak to that concern?

Ken (00:49:33):

Thank you, Mayor. So thank you Donna for the question as well. Donna what sector are you? You mentioned that you were in employment and staffing. Is there any particular industry that you have a question about or specifically are concerned about?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:49:51):

Sorry, Ken. It was Long-term care.

Ken (00:49:53):

Oh it was Long-term care.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:49:54):

She's in a Long-term care, yes, yes.

Ken (00:50:00):

She is in a Long-term care. I missed that part. I'm so sorry. So in terms of Long-term care, obviously right across Canada, Long-term care has been where we've struggled the most with COVID-19, it's where we've seen a lot of cases and unfortunately, a lot of deaths as well. So one of the things we did right away was, we limited, the provincial government limited the number of places that PSWs could work. So before COVID-19 obviously PSWs were working in multiple locations, working part-time in multiple locations. And so one of the things the government did early on in the first wave was restrict PSWs to only being able to work in one location. And of course that will in the long term be a very beneficial thing not just for the people who are in Long-term care but for PSWs themselves, who instead of having to sort of cobble together a living doing such important work across three and four different Long-term care facilities, they'll be able to work in one facility.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Ken (00:51:08):

And we've heard from a lot of Long-term care homes, as well as people who are in them and their family members that that has been a very positive thing to have the predictability and stability of a familiar face and from PSWs that as well. We've also provided pandemic pay as well early on for PSWs. We've also undertaken a staffing study to address the shortage. We know across the province, there's certainly a shortage of PSWs. And that's one of the reasons why we've also developed a retention program to keep PSWs as part of the provincial government's four year plan. You may have heard that we are increasing the number of hours that every person in Long-term care will have support from a PSW to four, four hours per day from just over two that we are at now.

Ken (00:52:10):

And we've been at that number for a long time. In 2009, the provincial government talked about increasing that number. Now we're actually in a four-year plan to do it. Why four years? Because we'll have to hire up to 22,000 PSWs in order to fill that requirement to meet that requirement. And so currently to help retired PSWs, we've set up a portal to help them apply to help during COVID-19. And we've had doctors, retired nurses that the provincial government has also reached out to RNAO as an example and ask anybody who's retired that wants to come back. And in fact, just last week on the education front we did the same with retired teachers allowing them to work more than 50 days in a year without compromising and having some challenges relating to salaries and pensions. So I think that's perhaps the best answer. If you have more details you'd like to speak about Donna, welcome to call Jane or the office here (905) 639-7924. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:53:23):

That's great. Thanks for that, very comprehensive. Again, really appreciate the information. Over to you moderator for our next question.

Moderator (00:53:34):

Again, a reminder to everyone joining us that if you have a live question we do want to hear from you, press three on your phone's keypad. Then we'll take your name and place you in the question queue. Up next is Winfred, who's joining us live now. Winfred welcome.

Winfred (00:53:52):

Hello thank you for the opportunity to talk and thank you for everything you all do. My question is about number of people in houses. I live on my own and I get very mixed messages about having people in your home from the province. For example, one day or one moment you would hear them saying that you can have 10 people in your house social distancing. Then they say you can only have people in your house that actually live there. And I find all this very confusing. So I choose to have nobody in my house but yet I know a lot of my friends do have their family. So I would like some clarification around this.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:54:31):

That is a great question Winfred and I'm sure that many people on the call will want the answer to that. So again, as these are provincial regulations I'm going to turn it back over to Ken from MPP McKenna's office to speak to what the rules are, and then there's recommendations which are different from that again. So we'll make sure we speak to both and perhaps that's the confusion. Ken, go ahead.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Ken (00:55:00):

Thank you, Mayor. Certainly it can be confusing and people are certainly not sure of what they should do and shouldn't do. So early on, there were limitations to having 10 people maximum in your home and 50 or 25 people outside. I know the mayor's chief of staff Victoria had that experience with her wedding in her backyard having to literally change the number the day of the wedding. And of course these things happen because public health measures are always looking at what's happening at that time and making decisions accordingly. So what we hear in terms of recommendations are that really at this point in time, the recommendations are that you really should not be doing things that are not essential not perhaps having people over that aren't in your household, limiting your bubble. And so that's important for us to be doing now because when you take a look at where we're at now, about five Fridays until Christmas, you know what we do now determines what happens next and what happens for Christmas.

Ken (00:56:10):

Obviously we all want to get together with our friends and loved ones. And as we're seeing in countries around the world if we limit that exposure for the next number of weeks, we can really flatten the curve here. So I think to your question, the recommendations are that you should be limiting people in your personal space in your home to the people that live in your home first and foremost. And if you have to have more than that in your home, the hard limit is 10 people that are perhaps in your social bubble or in your social circles that are there.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:56:51):

Thanks, Ken. And one of the things that I heard as well, Winfred you mentioned that you live on your own, that there is some guidance around people who live alone to join one other household so that there was the ability for people to interact. But so important to limit now the interactions with people outside your household. And that guidance actually has been from our medical officer of health Dr. Meghani, since the middle of October was suggesting limiting anything but essential trips, limiting contact to anybody who you don't live with or if you live alone with that other one household.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:57:35):

I think some folks have determined that social circles could change. Today I'm in this social circle and tomorrow I'm in that social circle and that's really been one of the factors of spread and it doesn't work like that. So thank you for the question and always I think people will make the decision that is the safest for them. And so you need to continue to do that Winnie. Moderator over to you, next question.

Moderator (00:58:03):

Up next, we have another live question from Jack. Also a reminder, press three on your phone's keypad to ask a live question. Jack welcome joining us live, please go ahead.

Jack (00:58:16):

Thank you for taking my call. My call has to do with a recent situation that I experienced walking into one of our local fast food restaurants. I won't mention which chain it was but I brought the situation to the manager's attention. And what happened was I walked in, placed my order and there must have been 15 people congregated around numerous tables all without masks. When I asked the manager about if this was okay and if there was anything that she was prepared to do about it, she basically shrugged her shoulders and said, "There's really not much I can do." So I just think there seems to be some confusion out there as to what's

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

acceptable and what's not. And I get it from a restaurant manager's point of view, it's difficult. You've got customers, you need to generate sales but at the same time, I just felt that going in to place my order, I just felt compromised. So how do you balance dealing with putting an end to gatherings in your restaurant, in your fast food restaurant establishment but then keeping those of us who want to just come in and place the order, place our order and leave safe.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:59:40):

That's a great question, Jack. And I know that you are allowed to take your mask off in a restaurant obviously if you're eating or drinking. But certainly anywhere else in the restaurant including if you go to the washroom or get up, you're supposed to wear your mask. So I'm going to turn that over to Ken again, these are provincial regulations. So Ken, what can you tell us about the regulations around and what to do in the situation that Jack has described where he goes in and people aren't wearing masks and the store managers feel limited to first of limit the number of people and enforce that mask rule.

Ken (01:00:23):

So thank you Mayor for the question. First and foremost the province of Ontario does require masks to be worn in indoor settings, indoor businesses, including restaurants. When you're seated, obviously you can't be wearing a mask while you're eating or drinking but when you get up and circulate, you certainly should have your mask back on. Now, businesses have signs, restaurants especially no shirt, no shoes, no service. Perhaps they can add mask to that sign because at the end of the day, a restaurant does have the ability, any business has the ability to say, listen, you need to wear a mask. And if you're not going to wear a mask they can ask any patron, any customer to leave because of course businesses are held accountable and are held responsible for folks that are not following the rules.

Ken (01:01:19):

Now, if you observe this sort of behavior, if you're seeing something that causes you to question the health and safety, not just of yourself but perhaps the people who work at that restaurant, you can certainly contact the Ministry of Labor Training and Skills Developments Safety Contact Center and that phone number is 1 877-202-0008. And you can call that number to make a complaint. The complaint can be anonymous if you're an employee of a restaurant or a business and you're seeing things that aren't correct or aren't proper, you can call as an employee and your identity is kept anonymous. And if you're a patron or a customer again your complaints and your identity can also be kept anonymous. I believe that there's also in terms of Bylaw enforcement perhaps the Mayor can talk about Bylaw enforcement and some of those opportunities as well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:02:22):

For sure yep. Thanks for that. Thanks for that handoff Ken you were reading my mind. Yes we do have a COVID hotline that is run out of the police dispatch and it is (905) 825-4722. And we do encourage people if you see something, say something and let us know and we do have Bylaw officers that will go out. They have taken many calls not only to restaurants but other businesses and even talking to folks in parks and other areas too. We used to educate folks about the rules there, we're now kind of shifting into enforcement and we think certainly the mask rule is well known by now. It's not complicated put one on when you're inside, put one on when you can't keep six feet distance. So fairly straight forward and that applies in public areas or common areas of apartments and condos. There was a regional Bylaw in addition to the provincial rules around masks. So we do expect people to follow that and there's a mechanism for us to enforce if needed. All right, over to you

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

moderator for our next question.

Moderator (01:03:42):

Again, a reminder to everyone who is joining us, that if you have a live question and you would like to ask it on the Town Hall press three on your phone keypad. We have our next live caller Greg, who's joining us now. Greg, welcome please go ahead.

Greg (01:03:56):

Hi there. I'd first like to say Mayor Meed Ward you're doing a fantastic job. I've been a resident of Burlington for since 1963 and I've watched the city grow. Burlington is a great city to live in. I do have a concern though. I'm a skilled trades worker at Ford Motor Company in Oakville and between joint health and safety, between the management union they've done a wonderful job to keep things under wraps and people are following guidelines and rules and whatever. My concern is, I go into places like Home Depot, Costco, Basics, all the places here in Burlington. And everybody's done a really wonderful job looking after all these rules and everything. The LCBO, this is my concern, why is it that the LCBO is the only place that you can walk in and say, "I'm exempt from wearing a mask. I have a medical condition." Now putting all of the staff vulnerable to anything.

Greg (01:05:06):

I just want to know why is it all the other places except for the LCBO? Can't we make this a mandatory thing to tell these people that they can't come in the store? There's other ways of shopping. You can do online shopping, pickup whatever. And if you're really concerned about your health, stay home please don't let other people be vulnerable to you. And it's very disturbing to me and I just hope we make this a one for all and hopefully we can make it a mandatory thing. So please help.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:05:43):

Thank you. Thank you so much for that question, Greg and thank you for your kind words. I love serving the community and it's nice to meet a resident who's been around for a long time and still loves Burlington because what's not to love right? Fabulous community. So the city's mask by-law, I can certainly speak to that, it does have exemptions, but it's not for a store. It is for people who... So LCBO doesn't have any special dispensation to let people avoid wearing a mask due to that exemption. It is in the Bylaw and people can not be required to demonstrate proof of how they meet the exemption.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:06:29):

So that's how our Bylaw and I'll turn it over to Ken in a minute to speak to the provincial Bylaw. I believe it's the same. However businesses can go above and beyond that, just like Ken said earlier no shoes, no shirt, no service, a business can go beyond that and say even if you meet an exemption we still don't feel comfortable having you in. And we certainly have heard some stories of businesses who have taken that approach and offered curbside pickup or other means for folks to still get what they need if they can't satisfy the requirement to wear a mask. So Ken, over to you around those exemptions and what the rules are at the provincial level.

Ken (01:07:17):

Thank you Mayor. So first and foremost, I do want to let everyone know I'm here in place of MPP McKenna, because she is at Queen's Park at committee. She's been at Queen's Park since seven this morning and likely there till around 10. And she just wanted to ensure that if there were questions of a provincial nature that we

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

were at least able to address them on the call tonight. So of course the LCBO is as everyone knows is owned by the province of Ontario. There is no exemption. There is no difference with the LCBO as with any other business. If I walked into Walmart and said I have an exemption because I have a medical condition, there is no requirement in Ontario that would ask Walmart or the LCBO or anyone else to ask that person to prove what their exemption is.

Ken (01:08:14):

And there's human rights and other sorts of issues that pertain to why that's the case. The thing is that, if two people are standing within six feet of each other or seven feet of each other and neither is wearing a mask, then they're both vulnerable. If one of those people perhaps who has a medical condition and has trouble breathing, if they have a mask on or whatever that medical condition may be as long as you have a mask on, there is some level of protection there. And for employees at LCBO, if you've been to an LCBO lately there are shields, there's masks, there's plexiglass walls separating each of the workstations in order to offer people some protection.

Ken (01:08:59):

If there are issues, if you go to an LCBO and you see something just like a Costco or a Walmart or a Maplevue or anywhere else that you don't think is appropriate, you can always contact the manager of that store or you can also contact the LCBO directly their corporate offices. I'm trying to locate the phone number here very quickly for everyone in case anybody does have that at that instance. You can call the LCBO at 1-800- 668-5226 and their corporate office hours are Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 4:30. So 1-800-668-5226 if you see something at the LCBO that you don't think is proper.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:09:50):

Thank you so much, Ken. And yes it's great to have you on the call. We don't always get this many provincial questions. So we're so glad that you were able to come while Jane is obviously engaged in very important discussions down at Queen's Park. So thank you, thank you so much. Moderator we are ready for our next question.

Moderator (01:10:15):

We have another live question coming up now it's Helen. Who's joining us now. Helen, please go ahead.

Helen (01:10:22):

Hi. Thanks for taking my call. My question was today I heard through the radio waves that Pfizer has a vaccine but I wasn't able to get the tail end of the information because I work outdoors and it was using a leaf blower but I had headphones on with a radio. Could someone fill me in on what the article entailed today?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:10:54):

Certainly I will give that to both two of our esteemed panelists tonight and I'm pleased that MPP sorry, member of parliament honorable Karina Gould is now able to join us so that's terrific. And so I'll ask you Karina first, what our federal government is doing about vaccination preparation. And if you know a little bit more about the Pfizer announcement and then possibly Dr. Kalina will also have some insights into that as well. So Karina over to you and welcome.

The Honourable Karina Gould (01:11:31):

Great. Thank you so much, Marianne. It's a delight to be with everyone. I am calling in from Ottawa and I was in a cabinet meeting until now, so great to be here. And I'm glad I got here just in time for the vaccine question. So, Helen as you mentioned, there has been recent news coming from Pfizer as well as Moderna another vaccine company that they feel that they have successfully completed clinical trials and both vaccines are looking to have about 95% efficacy. They still need to go through

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:12:04]

The Honourable Karina Gould (01:12:04):

the regulatory approval process. I believe that Pfizer has applied for an emergency approval in the United States. This is the most up-to-date information, Pfizer believes that they can begin manufacturing a vaccine potentially for ... to have vaccines ready within the first quarter of 2021. That being said, it still has to be approved here in Canada, but the government of Canada does have an agreement with Pfizer with regards to the vaccine, so that's good.

The Honourable Karina Gould (01:12:45):

We also have an agreement with Moderna as well as seven other potential vaccines to ensure that once vaccines are ready and they're manufactured, that Canada and Canadians will have access to them. However, I want to say there is light at the end of the tunnel, and this certainly provides a lot of hope I think for all of us. But it's still very important to remember that these vaccines are not ready, they have not been manufactured, and they're not at distribution stage just yet.

The Honourable Karina Gould (01:13:15):

That's all still work that is ongoing, and they need to be approved by Health Canada to be distributed here in Canada. This is good news, but in the meantime, we still really do need to make sure that we're practicing the best guidelines that public health is giving to us because we do not have a vaccine available yet. We have really good news at the prospect of a potential vaccine, and I think that offers all of us a lot of hope and hopefully encourages us to really buckle down and do what we need to do to get to the point when a vaccine is available.

The Honourable Karina Gould (01:13:51):

But even once the vaccine is available, it's not going to be a panacea because it will take time to vaccinate Canadians. But we are working on a strategy in terms of who gets the vaccine first and what distribution looks like. The federal government's role is really to purchase those vaccines and then we will distribute to them to the provinces that will get them into the arms of Canadians.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:14:18):

Thank you so much. Dr. Kalina, we have you on the line from Joseph Brant Hospital. Did you want to add anything to the discussion about vaccines?

Dr. Dale Kalina (01:14:27):

Sure. I'd be very happy to. Helen, thank you for the question. To add to what Minister Gould has just said, the ability for us to get vaccines really has been because of a lot of the hard work that has been performed by Minister Gould, counter part, who's of course our Halton, our Oakville MP here. A lot of great work and thank

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

you to you both for that. But to the vaccines themselves, so the Moderna vaccine and the Pfizer vaccine over the course of the past few weeks, we have had a lot of news releases about them and saying that there are anywhere from 90 to 95% effective after you give the two shots for the both vaccine. There're some discrepancies and some differences between the two of them, but they do both do work very well.

Dr. Dale Kalina (01:15:18):

The next step really is to see more of the vaccine results, start to come in, especially for ones that we have agreed to purchase here in Canada. But also as Minister Gould has said, to be able to actually roll them out. It's one thing to buy everything and it's an entirely different thing to get vaccines in arms. A vaccine really is just one of those tools in addition to hand-washing, wearing masks and distancing, like I keep saying, to really help reduce the rate of infections in our communities here.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:15:52):

Thank you so much for that. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator (01:15:58):

Up next. We have a question coming up from Karen. Who's joining us now. Karen, welcome, please go ahead.

Karen (01:16:05):

Hello and thank you Mayor for listening to my question. It's going to sound weird though. It's about animals. I know that Wisconsin and a few mink farms in the States have been quarantined. I know Denmark is calling 15 million minks because they've got a form of a mutated Corona virus that can move to humans and evade future COVID 19 vaccines. But I'm more concerned that canines cannot give us COVID, but we can give it to our canines and felines can actually give us COVID. Where do we stand on the animals? Because they seem to be getting Coronavirus and we all talk about humans, but we all have family members as pets. What is actually fact or fiction?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:17:14):

That is a great question, Karen. It was actually something that had come up early in the pandemic about whether when people are out walking their dogs, should also keep their dogs six feet away from each other's dogs. But I don't have the answer to that, but I'm hoping that Dr. Kalina from Joseph Brant Hospital might be able to shed some light on that. Doctor, what can you tell us about the ability of this virus to transmit among animals as well as ... I hadn't heard about the situation in Denmark, among minks. I don't know if you know anything about that, but what can you tell us about animal spread?

Dr. Dale Kalina (01:17:52):

Thank you, Mayor and thank you, Karen. I think that really is a great question. I myself have a large standard poodle named Lori, who's running around here somewhere. That's the type of things that I think about all the time too. Viruses, like Corona viruses, of which there are many different ones, and this is only one. They can transmit often times between especially different mammals. Flu viruses are the same way, we often see flu viruses that can be transmitted to humans from anything, from birds to pigs for instance. Now this virus, there've been a few cases where we have seen some animal infections in both dogs and cats. As we said, in a mutated form of the virus that was seen in mink in Denmark, so those have been called as of right now. Really the reason why those are being called is to reduce the risk of many of those mutations getting out into the human population.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Dr. Dale Kalina (01:18:47):

There are always virus modifications and mutations that happen through the natural life cycle of a virus. These types of monitoring that are going on, both in the animal kingdom and in humans as well is what we always do as epidemiologists, as infectious disease physicians and as veterinarians as well, to help monitor viruses. I suppose to kind of summarize it, many viruses really can infect humans and animals. I haven't personally heard of any kind of very severe outcomes in animals, that said, I'm not a veterinarian. But it is important to recognize that the main virus that is still spreading right, is the one that is targeted by that vaccine and they all spread the same way. So we can continue to do the same infection prevention and control measures to help reduce that spread.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:19:46):

Thank you. Very helpful. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator (01:19:52):

Well, up next, we have another survey question. For everyone joining us, you can use your touch tone phone to indicate your response. We want to know once the City of Burlington resumes in-person meetings, how likely are you to attend an in-person public meeting? If it is very likely, press one, if it is somewhat likely, press two, if it is not at all likely, press three. Again, once the city of Burlington resumes in-person meetings, how likely are you to attend an in-person public meeting? If it is very likely, press one, if it is somewhat likely, press two and if it is not at all likely, press three. Our next live question is from Lynn, who's joining us now. Lynn, welcome.

Lynn (01:20:35):

Hello.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:20:37):

You're on, Lynn. Go ahead.

Lynn (01:20:38):

Okay. Thank you. I've been sitting here for so long that I think I've forgotten the question, but I'll come up with another one. We're all looking at numbers and I find it almost impossible, I haven't actually found them yet. Numbers on Burlington, like we're lumped in with Halton? Is there a way to do that? Is there some ... Mayor, if you could share it on your Facebook page or some easy ways for us old folks to find this information would be helpful.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:21:11):

Absolutely. Great question, Lynn. Yes, there is a detailed information, you will get information overload possibly, so be forewarned. But Halton region, our public health unit is through Halton region. So halton.ca, right from the homepage, they have a link to COVID-19 and then you can see all of the data. You can see it for Burlington, you can see it for Halton Hills, Oakville and Milton as well as you can see it for the whole region. But it also gives you demographics, so not just how many people were reported with new infections, but you will also find how old were they, male or female, the information on any outbreaks so we can get a better idea of where spread or infections might be occurring. That resource is available again at halton.ca. I do have links to it on my webpage, but it's not a bad idea, thank you for the suggestion, Lynn. I could certainly put on my Facebook the daily

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

counts, if that would be helpful for residents to see. Ken, did you want to add anything from Jane McKenna's office, as I know the province keeps track of these things as well.

Ken (01:22:27):

Absolutely. Thank you, Mayor. If you go to janemckennampp.ca, right on our homepage, we have a link that gives you all the information you could ever want to know or ever not want to know about COVID-19 and about numbers. We have the details on the provincial COVID-19 public health framework, so you can understand the five different levels and what the difference is between them. There's a link to specific limitations that are imposed under the red control level, so you'll know exactly what you can and can't do. There's the detailed documentation, it's 16 pages explaining what the COVID 19 response framework is, and what all the measures are, which I talked about earlier.

Ken (01:23:12):

We also have a provincial data portal that gives you all the numbers that Ontario's chief medical officer of health and public health are using when making decisions. Then last but not least, we have the Halton region data as well as a letter issued by the chief medical officer of health, that was explaining on November 13th, what the restrictions meant and providing some additional advice. The chief medical officer, or the medical officer of health for Halton region Hamidah Meghani, for anyone who's interested, if you have questions that we've not been able to answer, her email address is Hamidah, H-A-M-I-D-A-H, .meghani, M-E-G-H-A-N-I, Hamidah.meghani@halton.ca. So if there's any questions that in on those documents, whether they're linked to from the city's, the mayor's Facebook page or from our page, if there's anything there, you're still not sure about Dr. Meghani would be, I'm sure pleased to assist.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:24:16):

That's great. Thank you for that, Ken. Moderator, we are ready for our next question.

Moderator (01:24:23):

Well, up next, we have Joan, who's joining us now with a live question. Joan, welcome.

Joan (01:24:30):

Thank you so much for taking my call. I am widowed, I live alone, I had all the symptoms of the virus. By two doctors over the telephone and two nurses, they wanted me or directed me to get ahold of the health care and go for a test. Now, my question, my dilemma was I couldn't get there. If a family member would take me and I came back positive, that meant that they had to be quarantined for 14 days also and being put back into their household also. I tried taxi cab to take me to the testing center and they immediately said no. Which I can understand completely, because they will not take anyone that is going for a test because that puts the driver in dire straights. I'm wondering if you have any type of in-home for elderly that are living alone and you have many symptoms, to get a test.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:26:14):

Wow, Joan. That is an incredible question. Thank you for that, it's something I think I've never been asked that and what a very difficult situation that you were in. I'm going to ask the hospital if they have any insights or suggestions, particularly around the in-house test but how to get there. I'm also going to then turn it to Allan Magi, who's our Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services around any policies

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

we might have at the city that would prevent that. We do have a handi-van service, which is different obviously than our conventional transit. I don't know if that would be deployed, but that is a very real concern that you've just put on the table and we need to figure out what to do to make sure that people are getting the tests. Dr. Kalina, what can you tell us about what the hospital policies or protocols or even any supports for people there might be?

Dr. Dale Kalina (01:27:21):

Of course. I'm very happy to answer that question. Can I just say thank you to Joan as well for asking that, but also for looking out for her friends and family as well. I think that shows really just how much we do care about one another and how important that is. There are a number of different ways to get tested, not only at the hospital, but also through paramedic services as well. I think that that might be a way that would work out really well for you. Which would be to contact public health and to articulate exactly that you don't have a way to be able to transport safely to the hospital.

Dr. Dale Kalina (01:28:03):

Now we do have, or we rather, we have made sure that of course there is public transit that's available to the hospital. Although that's not always the best method either for certain individuals. People that are quite symptomatic and things like that really shouldn't be exposing other people on public transit. Personal vehicles are much more important. All that being said, as I mentioned, I think one of the other ways related to get tests done are in your own home as supplied by public health and by the paramedic service that we have here in Halton. Certainly some great ways to be able to get tested, which is very important, but also not to expose anybody else.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:28:44):

That's great. Thank you. I wasn't actually aware of the paramedic services, so I think that answers the question, for sure, for everyone on the call. Thank you so much for that. We will go to our next question now moderator.

Moderator (01:29:03):

Well, Mayor Meed Ward, we're actually just about reaching the end of the event with the last couple minutes remaining. Are there some closing remarks you want to share with everyone listening in?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:29:13):

Yes. Well, thank you. Thank you so much moderator. Thank you to the hundreds and hundreds of people we know are on the call and have been on every call and we do really appreciate you joining us and thank you to all of those of you who got through. I know there were many more that were not able to ask your question because we had over a thousand of you on the call tonight, at least. We didn't get to everybody but if you do have questions, you have been given some resources. You can always call 3-1-1 for public health, certainly reach out to your local member of provincial parliament, Jane McKenna's office, reach out to Karina Gould's office, our member of parliament, you can certainly reach out to my office mayor@burlington.ca and we'd be happy to direct you with any additional questions that you have.

City of Burlington - Nov. 18, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:30:03):

Thank you so much for joining us, thank you for your very thoughtful questions. I think everybody on the call really benefited from all of them. Thanks to that and to our moderator. I want to enclosing thank all of our panelists who have been faithful and joined us at all of our calls throughout this pandemic. Eric Vandewall, the president and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital, Dr. Dale Kalina, our medical director of infection prevention and control at Joseph Brant Hospital, Tim Commisso, the City Manager for the City of Burlington, Allan Magi, our Executive Director of Environment, Infrastructure and Community Services for the City of Burlington, Chris Glenn, the Director of Recreation Services, Ken Audziss from MPP Jane McKenna's office.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:30:53):

She has been at Queens Park since early this morning doing her role as an MPP. Thank you so much, Ken, for stepping in, the information that you provided was invaluable to those of us on the call and thank you to Karina Gould, our member of parliament for Burlington. Thanks to all of you, thanks to our members of council, who I know were listening in. I think we all learned a great deal throughout this call about how we can manage this pandemic together. Thank you, Burlington residents for everything you do to keep yourself, to keep your family safe. You're doing well and let's keep doing it.

Moderator (01:31:36):

Thank you again to everyone for joining us on this evening's town hall. I just want to remind you if you have any questions, concerns, or feedback on today's telephone town hall, I want to remind you, you can share them with us by emailing them to city@burlington.ca. Again, please email your questions, concerns, and feedback to city@burlington.ca. Thank you again to everyone for joining us this evening and have a good night.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:32:01]