

City of Burlington - Mar. 26, 2020 Telephone Town Hall on COVID-19 Response and Support

Eric - Moderator - 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're joined by thousands of residents from across the city listening in. To ask a question live today, simply press 3 on your phone's keypad. Once again, press 3 to ask a question at any time over the course of the town hall. My name is Eric - Moderator and I'll be the moderator of the town hall this evening. Mayor Meed Ward chose this format as this is an interactive town hall with you, which means we want to hear from you. She and the city of Burlington have made it a priority to engage and connect with you and fellow residents to update you on the current status of COVID-19 and share some important health information that can help you and your family.

Eric - Moderator - Moderator (00:00:44):

Our intention is to get as many questions from you as possible. During this live phone town hall, we do encourage you to get involved and ask questions and of course you can do so by pressing 3 on your phone's keypad. Someone will take your name and place you in the question queue.

Eric - Moderator - Moderator (00:00:59):

Now for everyone's still just joining us, hello and welcome to the city of Burlington's telephone town hall meeting. We are live this evening with your Mayor, Marianne Meade Ward. In addition, we're joined by thousands of residents from across the city listening in. We want to remind everyone joining us that you can press 3 on your phone's keypad at any time and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue.

Eric - Moderator (00:01:19):

Now at this time I'm going to introduce Mayor Meed Ward so she can open up the town hall. Mayor, welcome. I know this is a very important town hall for you to share and speak with the residents of Burlington about the current situation with COVID-19. I know that you have a number of guests joining you to help address the questions and concerns residents might have and we have quite a few people joining us now Mayor, so please go ahead.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:01:41):

Thank you so much and I really want to welcome everyone to joining us on tonight's telephone town hall. Thank you for giving us your time. These are truly unprecedented times for our city and for our world, certainly in my lifetime and I think all of ours. COVID-19 is a real threat to our health and our well-being. And it's really important that we are able to come together and share timely and accurate information. And of course, not everyone here in Burlington has access to the internet or social media, so we've been sharing a great deal of information daily, multiple times a day already on those platforms. But this telephone town hall helps us to reach more of you in our community with these messages. So, I do know there are very many questions and concerns about how we can keep our families and our employees safe, how we can help each other, how we can work together to get to the other side of this crisis.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:02:36):

The purpose of tonight's town hall is to understand what questions you have and to do our best to answer them. I want to welcome and thank the experts and community leaders who've come together tonight to help us do just that. I want to welcome first of all our partners from other levels of government that are here tonight. I'm sure you'll have questions for them. Our member of federal parliament, the honorable Karina Gould is here on the line and our member of provincial parliament, Jane McKenna is on the line. We're also joined by the

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president and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital, Eric - Moderator Vandewall is here as well as Dr. Dale Kalina, who's the medical director of infectious disease at Joseph Brant Hospital. We also have our fire chief Dave Lazenby on the line and our deputy chief of police, Roger Wilkie along with superintendent Anthony Odoardi, both from the Halton Region police service.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:03:33):

Of course, your members of City Council are here on the line: Lisa Kearns, Shawna Stolte, Angelo Bentivegna, and Kelvin, Rory and Paul are either joining us shortly or listening in to your questions from home. We also have Tim Commisso, our city manager, to answer any city-related questions. I want to thank each of them for being here. My role tonight is really to answer any questions you might have for me personally, but any questions for any of them, I'm the question director. I just want you all to know that we are working very closely together every day, all these different agencies and more, different levels of government working closely together to get our community through this crisis and tonight's town hall is an important part of making that happen. So let's get started and get right to questions.

Eric - Moderator (00:04:26):

Thank you, Mayor, for opening up the town hall. We do have live questions coming in and we'll get to the first one in just a second. I do want to remind everyone joining us that if you have a live question you would like to ask on the town hall, you can ask that by pressing 3 on your phone's keypad. Someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. So again, press 3 on your phone's keypad at any time over the course of the town hall and someone will take your name and place you in the question queue. We're going to start with our first live question. It's going to be from Jack. Jack, welcome. You're joining us live.

Jack (00:04:57):

Thanks for taking my call. My question is, what precautions should we take, if any, when going for a walk and should we be wearing a mask when going into grocery stores?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:05:07):

Thank you very much for that. I'm going to turn that over to Dr. Dale Kalina from the hospital to answer that.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:05:15):

Thanks, Mayor Meed Ward. Thank you, Jack, for your question. Just to be clear, when an individual is on isolation or under quarantine, if they are mandated to stay inside or if they are sick and feeling unwell, they're not to be going outside. Now, of course, that is not for everybody on the call, so for people who are social distancing, it is important to get a little bit of fresh air every day.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:05:42):

What we all need to do to keep ourselves safe is ensure that we're staying two meters or six feet away from other individuals in an effort to make sure that you're not in contact with somebody who might be able to spread the virus. As always, I'd always recommend that you make sure you wash your hands when you come back inside and try to refrain from touching your face. These are the ways that we transmit the infection and the ways that we can help keep ourselves safe. To be clear, there is no rule for wearing a mask out in public. We know that the best way to prevent yourself from getting infected really is washing hands and staying farther away from individuals who might be sick.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:06:25):

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Great. Thanks for that and I would just add that we really are encouraging people to walk. Don't stop. If you are healthy and that you are out getting some fresh air, please don't stop and linger in our parks and especially don't congregate with others. Don't stop for a pickup game of basketball. Please don't go into our fields. They are closed. All of our sports fields are closed, our skate park, all of our facilities, our playground equipment. We are asking people not to let their children climb on those, as we know this virus can live on surfaces. We're really asking people to keep moving whether you're jogging or cycling or walking. That's great. It's good to get out for some exercise and fresh air, but keep moving. Don't stop. Stay six feet away from anybody that you are not living with in your household.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:07:19):

Also please take your garbage out of the parks. We've had an increase of people using our parks, of course, because people are home and we simply can't keep up with the volume of garbage. So we're asking people to take garbage out of the parks as well. All right, let's go to our next question.

Eric - Moderator (00:07:36):

Jack, thanks again for that question. We're going now to Joan who's joining us live. Joan, welcome.

Joan (00:07:42):

Hi. Hello.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:07:44):

Hello, Joan. You're on the air.

Joan (00:07:45):

Hello. I sent in a question. I am 85 years old. I'm living in south Burlington and I'm wondering if I need to go for a test where I would go and if I need to wear a mask. You've already answered that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:08:05):

Great. Thank you. I am going to let Dr. Kalina or Eric, I'll let you choose, whoever jumps in first, answer that question about testing.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:08:16):

Sure. This is Dr. Kalina again and I'm happy to answer that question for you, Joan. If you're feeling unwell and if you've got symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection, so that's anything from a cough to feeling tired to sore muscles and things like that, that's the time that I would ask that you call 311, the number for public health, and they will be able to help facilitate a test which we could do within Burlington. Now, do keep in mind if you're feeling very unwell and if you're worried, if you feel that you need help immediately, that would be a time to ask for immediate help and call 911. Now keeping in mind that 911 is for emergencies, that would help bring you into the emergency department. So just to reiterate, if you're feeling unwell and if you're concerned about having the test, your first call should be to public health at 311.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:09:14):

Thank you for that. Our next question.

Eric - Moderator (00:09:17):

We have another live question coming up now from Diane. Diane, welcome. You're joining us live. Please go

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ahead.

Diane (00:09:23):

I'm just wondering if there's any cases here in Burlington?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:09:29):

Thank you for that. Yes, actually there are two that I know of, but it changes daily. Halton Region does put that information on their website daily so you can check there for the most up-to-date statistics at the end of every day. I don't know if Eric - Moderator or Dale wanted to speak to that as well. No. Okay?

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:09:51):

This is Eric - Moderator Vandewall. I'll just add that there is one confirmed case of COVID-19 at Joseph Brant Hospital in our ICU.

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

Okay. Thank you for that. Next question.

Eric - Moderator (00:10:06):

Up next we have our question from [inaudible 00:10:07]. [inaudible 00:10:08] welcome to the town hall. You're joining us live.

Speaker 2 (00:10:14):

Hello?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:10:15):

Yes, you're on the air.

Speaker 2 (00:10:17):

Hi, I'm a Burlington resident and I just wanted to know... My wife just lost a job and I'm on the disability. I just wanted to know if you guys doing anything for the property taxes. I have a house because which is a 3000 square feet house and property taxes is real high on that and I might be able to... If you can defer the payment away or just stop the payment for a little while.

Speaker 2 (00:10:43):

Yes, actually we are doing that but I'll let our city manager Tim Commisso speak to the details of it.

Tim Commisso (00:10:51):

Thank you very much Marianne. Yeah, we are right in the process right now of looking at a deferral of essentially our property taxes. The deferral is any payment and interest that we have a charge on that. So normally we have a tax payment at the end of April. We're looking at least 60 days of deferral of that. And also that would be subject to a report going to council, I believe at early April. So council still has to prove that, but I don't anticipate that that will be an issue. So yes, we will have a deferral.

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

Thank you. Next question.

Eric - Moderator (00:11:34):

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Up next we have Wendy who's joining us on the line now. Wendy, welcome to the town hall.

Speaker 3 (00:11:39):

Thank you. So I have I guess a two part question. The first one is ventilators. How many do we have at Joseph Brant Hospital and are there more on the way? And secondly, for our current equipment, have we made any modifications like some of the other doctors in other areas of the world have made modifications to be able to service more patients at a time.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:12:04):

Great. I'll let Dr. Kalina speak to that from Joseph Brant hospital.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:12:11):

Thanks, Wendy. To answer a question with respect to how many ventilators we've got at Joseph Brant hospital, we do have at least 50 ventilators that are active and usable at Joseph Brown hospital right now. And we do have the means to be able to expand our ventilator capacity by using some additional ventilators that we have in the hospital. And those that have been donated from the community as well. So we do have quite a large capacity for individuals and are expanding that as well in an effort to be able to help individuals who do require ventilation.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:12:53):

Thank you, and maybe Eric - Moderator you can talk about sort of ongoing preparations to make sure the hospital is in a state of readiness.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:13:02):

Thank you Marianne. Yes, the hospital has been quite active over the past few months. So even prior to COVID-19, we have an ongoing preparation and screening for just the annual flu that we see as a matter of course over the course of the winter months. So we did enact our pandemic plan and we've been implementing a number of things. First we've introduced an assessment center for testing. So to the earlier call, I believe it was Joan who was asking, we do have a center through public health through 311, where people can get tested if they have the symptoms requiring a test. Secondly, we've also moved to active screening at the hospital. So we are screening all staff, all physicians and all patients. And as of most recently, we are also screening all visitors. Visitor restrictions have been enacted. And that is really to ensure that we keep our public, our physicians and our staff safe.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:13:55):

So we appreciate the understanding of our community and having to make those restrictions at this time. And we are also quite willing to take a look at exceptional circumstances based on the individual cases. The plan of the hospital right now is that we've been decanting the hospitals, so I know that sounds strange. Typically our hospital is 110 to 115% occupied and today we are about 71% occupied. And so we're decanting patients from the hospital who are able to go home or be discharged to other locations so that we can create capacity for the anticipated surge of COVID-19 patients that we expect to see in the weeks ahead. So our plan is really to see our new south tower become the COVID positive patient tower and then also having the north tower, the 1960s vintage tower being our COVID negative patient tower. And so we've also enacted ways where we can convert space or ambulatory clinics.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:14:52):

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For example, we've ramped down all of our elective clinics. We've ramped down all of our elective surgery, so our ambulatory space will also be used for us to flex into insurge in anticipation of increased demand for care for COVID patients. We have an ongoing management and monitoring of our supply chain and overall I'd say we're in a very good place in terms of preparedness. There's more work to do and our team is making decisions and actions every day to ensure that we're well-prepared. First and foremost, though, I would like to thank our physicians and our staff. Our physicians and staff have been doing yeoman's work to get ready, and I really want to thank them for their commitment to ensuring the best possible care we can provide to the citizens of Burlington during this very unprecedented time. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:15:40):

Thank you. Next question.

Eric - Moderator (00:15:45):

Wendy, thank you again for that question. We're going now to Ron for our next live question. Ron, welcome. You're joining us live.

Ron (00:15:52):

Thank you. I've just returned from the southern states today and I've got the quarantine to be in my house for two weeks. Does this mean I can't go outside and work in my garden on a nice day or do I have to be stuck there in the house?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:16:11):

That's a good question for Dr. Dale Kalina who for those who may be just tuning in, he's the medical director of infectious disease at Joseph Brant Hospital. Go ahead doctor.

Ron (00:16:21):

Thanks Mayor Meed Ward, and thank you for your question Ron. So, I suppose the best question to ask really in response would be is your backyard completely protected from other individuals. At the end of the day, the important thing about the quarantine, that you have to remain in for 14 days, is that you are not in contact with anybody else outside of your home.

Ron (00:16:45):

Realistically, if your backyard is fenced off and is isolated, you can do yard work and getting a little bit of sunshine is fine, but realistically you are not to be going out in public and are not to be in contact with other people.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:17:02):

Thanks. I'm also going to ask our member of parliament, the Honorable Karina Gould to jump in on this one because the government just made some announcements about enforced quarantine. So Karina, walk us through what that means.

Karina Gould (00:17:15):

Yeah, absolutely. Thanks Marianne. And thank you Ron for your question. So yesterday Patty Hajdu, the Minister of Health announced that she would be enforcing the quarantine act and requiring anyone arriving from outside of Canada to self isolate for 14 days. And the reason why we're doing this is because we have noticed that people are kind of taking a lax approach, as Dr. Kalina mentioned. This is about you as an individual.

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Karina Gould (00:17:48):

If you've been abroad not interacting with others for those 14 days or until you're symptom free. And the government will be conducting random spot checks to enforce this and there could be a fine of up to \$750,000 or up to three years in prison if people are found to be in violation of this. So we are taking this very seriously. It's also very important that you are not in contact with someone who is vulnerable or an at risk population and that you don't go out. I know Dr. Kalina said this, but ask someone to do your groceries, ask someone to drop stuff off. You're not to have contact with them. And we are taking this measure extraordinarily seriously and we'll be enforcing it. So thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:18:46):

Thank you. Next question.

Eric - Moderator (00:18:50):

Up next. We have a question from Jim. Jim, welcome to the town hall.

Jim (00:18:54):

Well, thank you very much. And first of all, thank you for running such a fine town hall process here tonight. My initial question has been mostly answered by the hospital.

Jim (00:19:04):

My initial question has been mostly answered by the hospital staff in terms of what to do, in terms of overloading and in terms of offloading, and I applaud that. In the event that facility does become overloaded, how far along are you in considering an auxiliary emergency facility to treat people who can be relocated but are unable to go home?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:19:25):

Maybe Eric - Moderator you can jump in on that, and for those who may be just be joining, Eric - Moderator is the President and CEO of Joseph Brant Hospital.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:19:35):

Thank you Jim. It's a great question. We are looking at a number of options in terms of how we can continue to provide care to people who may not require to be in the hospital facility. There's work underway to do... And that's already happening actually, is remote patient visits through technology and virtual visits. We're able to... Physicians still to engage with patients and provide care while they're in their homes. We're also looking beyond our four walls though, in terms of additional physical capacity. So, for example, we are having conversations with the hotel industry, locally in town, and that might be an option in terms of how we could potentially decant some patients from hospital today.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:20:15):

But also potentially look at other care models and space, recognizing that we want to be as prepared as possible. We may not have enough physical capacity at Joseph Brant Hospital. And then thirdly, we are looking at some onsite options, which I'm hopeful to be able to make an announcement on next week, in terms of additional capacity. So our approach Jim, is to prepare for the worst and hope for the best and we're looking at all options to ensure we have as much capacity as possible.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:20:47):

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Thank you for that. And we'll go to our next question, but for those who may be just joining us, if you do have a question, please enter *three and that will put you in the queue. Over to our next question.

Speaker 4 (00:21:00):

Yes. Just a quick reminder. As the mayor mentioned if you do have a live question, press three on your phone's keypad at any time. We're going now to Karen. Karen, welcome. You're joining us live.

Karen (00:21:10):

Hi there. Thank you for all the work you're doing on behalf of the residents of Burlington. We all appreciate it. I have three children, well they're not children, they're in their 30s on one is 40. But they all have jobs that put them in harm's way. My daughter's a nurse. My older son is a trucker who travels to the border of Indiana and Michigan to deliver steel. My other son, that I live with, he works for essential services in Toronto for the water, I guess Toronto Water. All three of them are being exposed to the public and can bring something home to their families. My son can bring something home to me because he's going into people's homes to clear up backed-up sewers and all kinds of things related to the Water Department in Toronto.

Karen (00:22:07):

How do we protect ourselves when our children are in these dangerous jobs and have more of a possibility of transmitting it to their family members? It's a worry for me because I'm always worried about them contracting something and then bringing it home. I guess, what I've heard too is that it's not even good to go for a walk. Because if you cough, they said that this COVID-19 is like a cloud that remains kind of hanging in the atmosphere for two and a half to three hours.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:22:48):

Well, we'll get some clarity from that from Dr. Dale Kalina, our Medical Directors of Infectious Disease at Joseph Brant Hospital. I might then, after Dr. Kalina Speaks, turn it over to our Member of Provincial Parliament who's here, Jane McKenna about supports that might be available for workers in that situation. So go ahead, Dr. Kalina.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:23:13):

Thanks Mayor Meed Ward, and thank you Karen for your question. I'd just like to address something right off the bat. The virus itself is actually spread through things like coughs and sneezes. It doesn't actually remain in the air like you've mentioned. Which was one of the silver linings about this virus, is that when you cough or when you sneeze and the virus gets expelled like that, it actually falls to the ground. So it doesn't actually remain in the air for any amount of time. So it is important to stay two meters or six feet away from people, especially when they're coughing and sneezing, as to reduce that risk of that virus coming in contact with you. Now to speak about your children and I thank them for being able to provide those essential services to all of us and for putting themselves in harm's way.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:24:12):

I think it's important for your children to always look out for themselves as well. That means that they need to be able to protect themselves while they're in their line of work. Especially for your daughter who's a nurse, you mentioned. She will be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment at work. As should your other sons, if they are in contact, again within those six feet, of other people who have symptoms. If they don't have any symptoms, especially your son that you're living with, if he doesn't have any symptoms, the risk of transmission of the virus is fairly low. If he does start to experience symptoms, the important things to do would be to stay a

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little bit farther away from him if you can. Try to allow him, especially to stay in his room for instance, and to not share a bathroom if possible.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:25:06):

At the end of the day, if you're concerned about your son being sick. Or if you're concerned about exposure within the household, 311 at Public Health, is again a great resource to reach out about specific questions. But once again, just to reiterate, when people cough the virus or sneeze the virus, it actually falls to the ground. It doesn't stay in the air. Which is good news I would say. Thanks for your question.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:25:33):

Thanks. I'll turn it over to our MPP, Jane McKenna. Then maybe after her also to our MP Honorable Karina Gould to talk about folks who would... These would be in the nonessential services. I know I get this question a lot, around what supports there are if people lose their job. So, Jane, we'll start with you.

Jane McKenna (00:25:55):

Thanks so much Mayor Marianne Meed Ward. First of all, thank you so much for the question and our children obviously are our whole lifeline of you know what we have. My oldest daughter is a nurse as well and is working nonstop, so I hear this as well. But every place that we have spoken to, they take their own protocols and procedures to make sure... Because in companies it's an extension of their family, right? They want to make sure that they're safe. And we want to make sure that the health and wellbeing of Ontario is our government's number one priority. We just passed a bill on the Parliamentary Assistant to Labor and we just passed a Bill 186. Just to make sure that during this time of great uncertainty, obviously we're in uncharted waters right now. People need to be able to follow the advice of medical health professionals. If they are feeling unsafe, again what the doctor has just said, to call 311 to make sure you can get the answers that you need from Public Health.

Jane McKenna (00:26:53):

But I do think I understand as a mother exactly what you're saying. But I do really believe that the people that are having that are working right now are making sure that proper protocols and procedures are being taken. Obviously, I have a friend that's called into the office numerous times because he has a trucking company. And they are making sure that everybody is healthy and safe and that everybody feels very secure in these times right now. But if you feel that you're in a situation that you feel unsafe, please make sure that you have that ability to be able to walk away from that situation, if there is a situation that you are feeling like that. If there's anything else that you can obviously call my office 905-639-7924 if you have any other further questions.

Jane McKenna (00:27:49):

I do think that the majority of people are making sure that their people are being safe. They want to make sure that they go to work every day and come home. I do know the companies that are calling our office, I know every level of government is having many, many calls right now. That they are very much concerned for the wellbeing of their people that work with them and everybody is doing the best possible, what they can, with their process and protocol.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:28:16):

Thanks Jane and I'll turn it over now to our MP Karina Gould to talk about the recently announced employment supports that are available. Particularly for those folks that are, we call in precarious work, part-timers, contract, self-employed and those... there's a whole package. Go ahead Karina.

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Karina Gould (00:28:35):

Absolutely. Thanks Marianne and thanks Jane. I just want to reiterate, what both Marianne and Jane have said. But just for everyone's peace of mind to know that all levels of government are working really well, hand in glove together, making sure that we're doing what's best for our residents and for Canadians.

Karina Gould (00:28:58):

I also just want to reinforce why we're taking these measures for social distancing and asking people to stay home if they don't need to go to work. Or if they don't have something to do, like go to the grocery store or go to the pharmacy. It's to make sure that the people who are on the front lines working at a grocery store, in health care, ensuring that the goods that we have get delivered across the border. It's to keep them safe as well. That's why we're asking people to stay home and I keep reinforcing that message everywhere that I possibly can. It's the reason why we enforced the quarantine acts yesterday as well, to make sure that we're keeping people safe.

Karina Gould (00:29:45):

The question around the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. It was announced yesterday by the prime minister and it takes into account Canadians who have lost their jobs, are sick, quarantined or taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19. Working parents who must stay home without pay to care for children who are sick or at home because of school and daycare closures. Wage-earners as well as contract workers and self employed individuals who would not otherwise be eligible for employment insurance. And workers who are still employed but are not receiving income because of disruptions to their work situation due to COVID-19. And it would provide \$2,000 a month for up to four months.

Karina Gould (00:30:29):

We've really tried to streamline this as much as possible. We introduced this legislation in the house on Monday. It was passed early Tuesday morning. It was passed in the Senate on Tuesday and received Royal Assent and so now we're standing up the website so that people can apply. And after applying people should start receiving their within 10 days. If folks are still eligible for EI and if they have applied, they should stay in that system. But this Emergency Response Benefit is really to kind of pick up the folks who don't qualify for EI or who can't work for reasons related to COVID-19. If you have questions about it, do not hesitate to contact my office. My phone number is 905-639-5757. We are happy to support you and the portal isn't up yet, but we're taking contact info and we'll send it out as soon as it is available. Thank you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:31:40):

Great. Thanks on to our next call.

Speaker 4 (00:31:44):

Up next we have a call from Mary. Mary, welcome to the town hall. Please go ahead.

Mary (00:31:50):

Good evening. I have a couple of questions actually. First for the doctor. I hear that the age of death used to be predominantly older, but now I understand that's changing. So I wanted to know how true that is.

Mary (00:32:09):

My second question is, also I guess for the MPPs. How far behind are we on testing results? Because I was told, or we were told, that it's three to four days. Yet my son, who's a doctor and is supposed to get preferential treatment so that he can actually go to the hospital and work, hasn't got his results and it's been seven days.

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So he's missed four days of work because of that. And he feels fine now.

Mary (00:32:45):

My third question is to the mayor. At city hall some of the people seem to be working from home and I've been able to communicate with them. Other people, I'm not sure. So how can we know who is working and who isn't? Once everything is restored to some sense of normalcy, are you preparing any measures to quicken the backlogs that are going to accumulate for permits and for council meetings and things like that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:33:23):

Great. Thanks. So I will start at the top. The first question was around the age of people who are most affected or die from COVID-19. Over to you, Dr. Kalina From Joe Brant.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:33:36):

Thank you Mayor Meed Ward. I can probably answer both those first two questions if that's okay with you as well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:33:43):

Absolutely.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:33:45):

With respect to the age of mortality, the data that we've seen from around the world is certainly that those who are older have a higher rate of mortality. So that is to say in plain terms, you're more likely to pass away from this infection, the older that you get. The data that we have in Canada also shows that although you are more likely to pass away if you're older, there's still a mortality rate associated with all people that get the infection that are adults. We are not seeing any mortality in children or in infants for that matter, but this is a significant virus. And the mortality rate is higher than what we would see with something like the flu. Again, it is a little bit higher in the elderly as you get older, but we are seeing mortality across the board.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:34:39):

Now to your second question very briefly. There is certainly a backlog at Public Health labs. I've seen delays of six to seven days as well, and I'm sorry to hear about your son's experience. If he was tested at our hospital, he's more than welcome to reach out to Employee Health Services. But beyond that, I know that there's been a very strong push to bring other labs for testing live, and that's been happening across the province over the course of the past several days and week. To that end we do have more labs that are coming live in our area which will help us speed up testing significantly.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:35:15):

Great. With respect to the staffing issue, I'm going to let our City Manager, Tim Commisso, speak to how the city right now is handling staffing and I'll chime in if there's anything further to add. So go ahead Tim, our City Manager.

Tim Commisso (00:35:30):

Sorry, I'm just coming off mute. So thank you very much Mary for the question. It is something that we are really putting some focus on I think in terms of how do people connect in sort of city hall. You are right. We have most of our staff that are able to work from home working from home. So I guess it would depend somewhat on, I think what you're looking for, but we do have our Service Burlington function, which is our front end customer

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service, fully operational. What we're finding right now is most of our communications is through email. So you can send an email to a city@burlington.ca. Or if you'd know the person you want to deal with, you can just add their name to the front of that. The other option, what I find is, certainly the mayor and myself, I'm happy to have our emails out if you're not getting hold of somebody, we can certainly direct it.

Tim Commisso (00:36:28):

I think what we're trying to do really is deal with the fact that we don't have a customer counter operating in any of our facilities but through telephone and email. So our 905-335-7600 main number should get you somebody that you can talk to. I think if you're still having problems, by all means, you can contact myself, timcommisso@burlington.ca or the mayor certainly is always available. Thank you for that question.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:36:59):

Right and anyone can reach my office, pretty much 24/7 these days, mayor@burlington.ca. I will just add to your last point, Mary, that you know we're not going to be going from zero back to 100% or where we are now in a state of having deployed most of our staff to home offices. In some cases redeploying them from what they normally do to other areas where they can serve the efforts of the city.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:37:29):

On our essential services, we have a number of essential services that we still will be doing in the city. Obviously we want to make sure our infrastructure doesn't fall into disrepair. That's just one example. So there are still a number of our staff that are working. We talked earlier on the call about how all employers are trying to keep the staff safe. We're certainly taking those measures as well. We've got our bus drivers out to make sure people who are essential workers themselves out in the community can get to where they need to go. There's still lots of folks working, but we have deployed as many as possible.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:38:03):

... The folks working, but we have deployed as many as possible to offsite for obvious reasons and it will take some time, once the crisis is over, to ramp back up to full speed. We expect that this will not be over in the next couple of months. We're now planning at the city for a three-month horizon and we'll figure that out in the next days and weeks what that looks like.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:38:27):

But I think we're in for a long haul. This is certainly not going to be over April 6th, which was the first indication we had about a week ago when schools closed and the world has changed inside of seven days.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:38:40):

So back to our moderator to take a question and maybe just [crosstalk 00:38:44] out instructions again for how folks can ask a question and if they're not getting through, maybe that means that the question queue is full. I don't know, but I'll turn it back over to you, Eric.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:38:55):

Mayor, thank you for reminding everyone that if you would like to ask a live question, you can do so by pressing three on your phone's keypad at any time over the course of the town hall. Now, we have our next live question. It's Lorene who's joining us now. Lorene welcome.

Nick (00:39:14):

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It's Lorene's husband, Nick.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:39:16):

Hey, Nick.

Nick (00:39:18):

Yes. She was doing laundry. Anyways, we're concerned about Toronto closing down the playgrounds, yet we haven't out here. Do we see that as a problem out here or not?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:39:30):

Oh, absolutely a problem. I'll take that one because I did a video on it today. We actually have closed playgrounds in the city of Burlington. We made that decision well over a week ago. We put signage up that the playgrounds were closed. We have closed the sports fields, the fenced sports fields that we have, all of our artificial turf. Even our unfenced fields are closed for pickup games because that just encourages people to congregate.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:39:57):

We've also completely closed Lowville park and the parking lot because people were continuing to use the playground, congregate around picnic tables, having large gatherings. And that absolutely has to stop. I sent that message out today on all of my social media platforms and did a video with it. We need people to stay off the playgrounds, out of the parks in terms of congregating in groups.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:40:22):

And a group is essentially anybody who's not living with you in your immediate household. Any other person, even if it's your neighbor or friend, you need to keep six feet away. Walk, don't stop through the park. People can keep walking, they can jog through a park or a trail or cycle, but do not congregate. Especially do not congregate with anyone who doesn't live in your household.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:40:48):

So, we have sent that message out multiple times in the strongest possible terms. We have closed parks, we've put barricades up at Lowville. We don't want to have to barricade parking lots outside of our other parks. We've got 150 of them in the city. But we're prepared to take stronger measures to control this because this is putting those individuals who are congregating as well as all of their friends and neighbors who might come into contact, it puts all of us at risk and it puts all of our healthcare workers and our first responders at risk who are looking after us.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:41:24):

So, we're asking people not to do that. I really appreciate the call and as I said on the video, please don't make me get my megaphone out and drive around the parks and shoo everybody away. Let's do the right thing for each other. Next question, please.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:41:41):

Up next we have a question from Peter. Peter, welcome. You're joining us live.

Peter (00:41:47):

Hello. Thank you for holding this Town Hall. This is excellent. We're grandparents and we have a daughter who

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was working from home and a son-in-law who is working at his factory. He's been declared essential.

Peter (00:42:06):

We've been self isolating for 14 days. We came back from Portugal. We have had no symptoms at all, so as of April 1st we are finished the self isolation and my granddaughter is hoping, or my daughter actually is hoping that we can start babysitting the granddaughter again. How do you feel about this?

Peter (00:42:30):

We're just not sure this is great. We love her to death and we would love to have her in our home, but we don't know if it's a good thing to do.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:42:40):

I'm going to ask again back to our Dr. Dale Kalina from Joseph Brant Hospital to speak to that. Go ahead.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:42:49):

Thanks, Mayor Meed Ward. I feel like I'm doing a lot of speaking today, but I'm happy to help. So, thank you for your question, Peter. At the end of the day, it does need to be a kind of risks-benefits conversation.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:43:05):

I recognize that it's difficult if your daughter is working from home to have the kids there at all times. In an ideal world, people will stay within their homes and will be only in contact with people that live with them. That is preferential but if your grandkids can't be looked after, then perhaps some other arrangement can be made. But at the end of the day it really is best if we're staying in our own homes and are keeping groups to a minimum and keeping farther away from anybody else.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:43:45):

Thanks for the question. There hasn't been a question related to policing and enforcement, but I know I'm getting inundated with those calls. And we do have Deputy Chief Roger Wilkie on the call tonight and Superintendent Anthony Odoardi from the Halton Regional Police Service.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:44:03):

So, I'm just wondering if that would be a good time for either one of you to weigh in on what the enforcement responsibility of the police is and who to call for people... We're getting the calls. I know you are for folks who are wanting to report behavior that they don't think is appropriate in this time. So, maybe first over to you, Superintendent and then to Roger Wilkie.

Anthony Odoardi (00:44:32):

Okay, thanks and good evening. I can speak to the granular level of both some of the calls we are receiving and how we can help. And first and foremost, part of our duty as the police officers here in Burlington is to educate and ensure that the folks who live, work, and play here understand the rules of what we're doing right now.

Anthony Odoardi (00:44:57):

And much of that is to respond and to educate. So keeping that in mind, we can go over three tiers of generally what we're getting calls for. One is in relation to social distancing. The group of kids walking down the street, they shouldn't be hanging out together. Or there seems to be a group playing soccer on a pitch. That's one right now where we have no enforceable provisions. And so we send an officer, we take a call, and we educate from a

distance. We have some dialogue and we educate.

Anthony Odoardi (00:45:37):

And to date it's been quite successful and we've had no issues. And in fact, we have not had an opportunity where we've received a complaint and there's been some defiance and where we've laid a charge. So that's very positive and people, once educated, seem to be very compliant.

Anthony Odoardi (00:45:58):

In terms of the Emergency Measures Act, there are enforceable actions there for police. In the first instance, we will take the call and educate as we've indicated before and we have done so. And to date that has really dampened any further recidivism or repercussions amongst business owners in fact that had been open, didn't understand whether they were essential or nonessential. We provide some dialogue and then provide them the exact location where to find that information. So good news on that front, too. Although there's enforcement provisions there, of course, we have not yet had to do that and we received calls about those businesses.

Anthony Odoardi (00:46:41):

So, for instance, if you see a roofing company, they fall under construction and they would be considered an essential service at this point. And, mainly we're getting many calls about that sort of industry.

Anthony Odoardi (00:46:55):

And then third, with the new announcement from the federal government about the Quarantine Act. It's an act that has been around and we are just receiving legislative process information on legislative process there and initial information. And I understand that we have some members of Parliament on the call as well that we will be assisting federal authorities in doing random inspections and/or receiving those calls and working with more localized health departments in regards to complaints about those.

Anthony Odoardi (00:47:28):

So in fact, it's been good news from the Halton Police, Burlington specifically. And I'll turn it over to the Deputy for any further comment.

Roger Wilkie (00:47:39):

Great. Thank you, Anthony. It's Deputy Chief Roger Wilkie here. Maybe what I'll do is I'll comment a little bit about what we're doing organizationally to ensure that we have sustainability. We're 24/7 and we have an essential service to our community for public safety and wellbeing.

Roger Wilkie (00:47:55):

And about two weeks ago, we stood up a pandemic control group internally to really assess how we provide service delivery and how we can ensure that we mitigate risk for our frontline personnel. And so, we've done a really robust standing exercise. It's around the clock. Anthony's been doing a fabulous job with his extended team on navigating a number of operational and administrative challenges for us.

Roger Wilkie (00:48:23):

I can tell our listeners that we're very well positioned because of our proactive nature in that regard. You've got the ability to be very nimble and to respond as required to our changing times. It seems like every day we're watching the news ticker and there's new pieces of legislation, there's new emerging issues and trends that we're being mindful of. And I can tell you that we're in a good state to be able to serve not only the residents of

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Burlington but Nelson, Oakland, Halton Hills as well.

Roger Wilkie (00:48:50):

So, we've got good things in place to continue our level of service delivery to the community. We have closed our stations, but we have opened up other areas of reporting and engagement with the community to ensure that we're meeting their needs while at the same time minimizing the risk of exposure to our members so that we can continue to provide the service that our community expects of us.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:49:17):

Thank you so much. I did want to come back to the question about testing and capacity in the system and specifically how many tests are being done each day. And I know our NPP, Jane McKenna, wanted to weigh in on that. And then, maybe we'll go back over to Dr. Kalina. So, Jane, what can you tell us about testing for COVID-19 and the capacity of the system?

Jane McKenna (00:49:43):

Thanks so much, Mayor. So, I just want to, just to reiterate, that as a 5:30 p.m. today, Ontario has completed 38,550 tests, 20,727 tests have been negative, and 835 confirmed cases. 10,965 cases have currently been investigated and eight patients have recovered. We're doing an average of 2,500 tests a day, but by the end of this week, Minister Elliott has said we're going to be up to 5,000 tests a day.

Jane McKenna (00:50:14):

But also I want to acknowledge too that Minister Elliott did say that with the telephone support, we've added 1,600 phone lines to telehealth and also 130 additional nurses. If you have any questions, I'm going to reiterate this again. Please call Telehealth Ontario 1-866-797-0000. And also with our economic update as of yesterday, we put \$160 million for COVID-19 monitoring surveillance lab and home testing as well as virtual care and additional capacity at Telehealth Ontario and 23.8 million to enable more physicians to conduct video, email, or phone visits.

Jane McKenna (00:50:58):

And then just last before I close off, there was a question on here about the snowbirds coming back into their homes and going outside in their backyard. I just want to reiterate that we've had a lot of calls here and I also live in a condo downtown that if they're coming home, they have to stay in their apartment. Going down the elevator to go outside and get fresh air, they're not clear that they're not allowed to do that. You know, obviously there's condos that have said they'll pick up the recycling outside of their condos. But just to be very clear, once you get home, you need to stay in your condo and not come out of your condo to go out and get fresh air. You can go on your balcony.

Jane McKenna (00:51:33):

Thank you.

Karina Gould (00:51:35):

And Marianne, could I just jump in on the question as well? Karina

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:51:37):

Yeah, go ahead. Is this Karina?

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Karina Gould (00:51:39):

Yes, it is, yes.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:51:40):

Go ahead. I just wanted to kind of reinforce Jane's point there just for testing in Canada. So, we've conducted 158,598 tests in Canada, 3,731 has been positive, but 142,161 have been negative. We are working on ramping up testing capacity and we're working with the provinces. We're coordinating further testing capacity.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:52:13):

And just to give folks a sense of scale, we're around fourth in the world in terms of testing in Canada on a per capita basis. So, we're the Public Health Agency of Canada, working with public health agencies in the provinces and then at the regional and municipal levels is working in a very coordinated fashion.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:52:37):

You can check all of these numbers. They're all online. You can go to canada.ca/covid19 and it's right there. It's the first thing that you can see on the website. And there's also both the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario have self-assessments online that you can take to see whether or not you should call public health. I think these are really wonderful tools to kind of give people a sense of whether their symptoms are potentially COVID-19 and whether or not they need to call. So, thanks very much.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:53:17):

Thank you. I think that answers a question, that's really helpful. We'll go back out to our callers now.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:53:24):

Well, we do have another live call coming up, but I actually just want to give you an update, Mayor Meed Ward. We're going to be extending the event by another 15 minutes just because we've had a lot of engagement. So, we are going to go to our next live question that's going to be coming up from Sarah.

Eric - Moderator Vandewall (00:53:39):

Sarah, welcome. You're joining us live. Please go ahead.

Sarah (00:53:43):

Oh, yes. I just have two questions. One is just about the Halton Board had announced that the students were off until about April 6th. And I know the Premier has said that he doesn't expect students to return. I'm just wondering if there's any new information regarding that.

Sarah (00:53:59):

My second question is just regarding people who have traveled out of the country, particularly those who have returned after March break. And I'm wondering how we actually know who's returned because I know I've heard rumors about people saying they're just going to stop at the grocery store and when I've been at the grocery store, I've noticed that the majority of the people that are working there are young students who are sort of picking up the slack for full-time employees who have to be home with their children. And so they're at great risk. So, I'm just wondering how we're actually monitoring and knowing who has come back into Burlington, into Halton.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:54:41):

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Certainly. Thank you so much. So, I'm going to direct the first question around any insight about the school, when school might be back to our NPP, Jane McKenna, who's on the call. And then I'll direct the second question around how does anybody know who's returned and should be self-isolating to our MP Karina Gould, as that is a federal enforcement now.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:55:03):

So, go ahead, Jane on what can you tell us?

Jane McKenna (00:55:08):

Thanks so much, Mayor. So, Premier Ford and Minister Lecce of Education have signaled that schools obviously will not be resuming on April 6th. So, additional details will be announced within the next few days.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:55:21):

Okay. So stay tuned. Thanks for that. And over to you, Karina.

Karina Gould (00:55:28):

Sorry, just getting back off mute. Yeah, absolutely. So I mean, part of this is that anyone who comes into the country now will be tracked. We are keeping tabs on that so that we can also do these spot checks to enforce it.

Karina Gould (00:55:46):

Previously when you returned, before we enacted the Quarantine Act, when you were going through Canada Border Services, you had to agree to self-isolate. Now that this is mandatory, we are keeping track of that and we will be doing these spot checks.

Karina Gould (00:56:11):

Som the government is absolutely tracking who is coming back into Canada and what their address is. I would also reiterate that with the Quarantine Act in place, you have to go straight home. Everyone is being told that, everyone is being told you cannot stop at the grocery store, you cannot stop at the pharmacy. You must go straight home. You cannot take public transit to get there.

Karina Gould (00:56:37):

If you arrive in Canada now and your final destination is not in the city that you land, you must quarantine in the city where you land and Public Health will arrange for a place for you to stay. CVSA is collecting this information at all borders.

Speaker 6 (00:57:04):

He is collecting this information at all border points for people. So know that this information is being collected, and folks are being monitored. Thanks.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:57:13):

Great. Thank you. Back out to our next question.

Moderator (00:57:17):

Up next, we have Joan who's joining us live. Joan, welcome. You're joining us on the Town Hall now.

Joan (00:57:22):

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Yes. Thank you very much. My husband and I are 85 and 86, in good health, have not been out of the country, haven't been anywhere for weeks. We live in an apartment, take care of ourselves, so with no family around to give us a hand. However, every four weeks, I have two very lovely cleaning ladies come in. Is this a good idea for me to continue?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:57:49):

Great question. I'm going to let Dr. Dale Kalina, our Medical Director of Infectious Disease at Joseph Brant Hospital give us some guidance on that. Go ahead.

Dr. Dale Kalina (00:57:59):

Thanks for your question, Joan. At the end of the day, as we've said beforehand, I think that it's best that people are just in contact with people that they live with at this time. I recognize that that means that some cleaning businesses, for instance, won't be able to get as much business. But I do think that it's prudent that you aren't bringing other people into your home and that you're staying farther away from individuals. I think that it's important that you're really just in contact with the people that you live with.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:58:34):

Thank you. That's clear. Back to our next question.

Moderator (00:58:39):

Up next, we're going to go to Lisa. Lisa, welcome to the Town Hall. You're joining us live.

Lisa (00:58:45):

Thank you. First of all, thank you so much to Mrs. Mayor and all of the Joseph Brant Hospital workers. We are so indebted to you.

Lisa (00:58:54):

I'd just like to ask, what, if anything, can we as a community do besides the obvious mandate that's happening and being directed? Are there any volunteer jobs that we can help you with? What do you need?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:59:10):

That is a fantastic question. Thank you, and I'm going to take that. So we at the City of Burlington have put together resources. One of the best parts of our community, the best part, is the people who live in it and the generosity and the big hearts. As soon as this crisis hit, my office, I know all of the councillors got flooded with calls to offer help and assistance.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (00:59:37):

We actually do have two of our councillors who've been really key in this on the line. Maybe I'll turn it over to Councillor Rory Nisan, Ward 3, and then Councillor Shawna Stolte, Ward 4, who've been bringing a lot of these resources forward so that we can put it out. They are available on our City of Burlington website, burlington.ca/coronavirus, where all those resources are. But Rory, maybe you can talk about one or two of them, and then Shawna chime in as well. Go ahead, Rory.

Rory Nisan (01:00:09):

Okay. Thank you, Your Worship. Appreciate it. I'll speak to the Good Neighbour Project - GTA, and Shawna can also speak to some great work that's arisen out of her ward. So the Good Neighbour Project - GTA, it's a

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Facebook page that you can go to and you can offer to help people with groceries or pharmacy or other urgent trips. So that's people who aren't able to leave their house because of their age or because of their immune systems or other reasons. What's great about this page is that they have set up a phone number, so people who don't even have internet access are able to reach us. We'll be sending out that number through different means offline and online so that everyone has the opportunity to call in if they need that support.

Rory Nisan (01:01:02):

But you could volunteer there, which I'm sure would be quite welcome. We've spoken to them, and they're always looking for more volunteers. So the Facebook page is Good Neighbour Project - GTA. Just for your info and everyone on the line, the phone number that you can call if you need assistance for supplies and groceries is (647) 873- 2230, (647) 873-2230. So that's a great way you could help out. Back to you, Mayor.

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

Shawna, over to you. I know there's multiple Facebook pages, but walk us through that resource that's available. Might take a minute to get off mute there. While Shawna's getting off mute, I will chime in and say that there's also 211, which is the phone number you can call for questions related to food, family services, employment, community programs, as well as crisis support. That phone number has been around for some time. So anyone who is in need themselves, that is also another resource.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:02:23):

So back out to Shawna. Were you able to get off mute?

Shawna Stolte (01:02:27):

I was.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:02:28):

There, great!

Shawna Stolte (01:02:28):

Thank you for reminding me. I was chatting away about Facebook and forgot that I was still on mute. So thank you for that.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:02:34):

You're welcome.

Shawna Stolte (01:02:35):

I was wondering why no one was answering me. At any rate, yes, there's been a few groups that have come up. One that's come to my attention that has almost 5,000 members, so it is really broad across the whole City of Burlington, they have a really neat name they've come up with. Instead of fear mongering, their name is CareMongering. So I think that's really neat. So the Facebook group is CareMongering BURLINGTON Share/Swap/Help. It's a Facebook group that is set up. As I said, there's almost 5,000 members now across the City of Burlington. It, as Rory had mentioned, is a similar Facebook group where you can log on, they have announcements, they have different opportunities for you to request assistance if you need some help to pick up some groceries or prescriptions. They also have a lot of volunteer opportunities. I really encourage people to try logging on to that. That's CareMongering BURLINGTON Share/Swap/Help, and there's a lot of great resources there.

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Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:03:28):

Great. Thank you for that. Anyone who might be in need out there, I will also let you know that you can contact the Burlington Food Bank. They are taking special precautions to arrange for deliveries of food. So [905] 637-2273 is their phone number. Or Food for Life, [905] 635-1106. These numbers, they are also posted online, and the whole audio of the call will be posted online if you didn't get to jot those down. But those resources are also available. Thank you for that, and we'll go back out to our next call.

Moderator (01:04:05):

Our next call coming up is going to be from Kim. Kim, welcome to the Town Hall. You're joining us live.

Kim (01:04:11):

Thank you very much. Good evening, everyone. I'm a widow with a teenage son. I'm disabled, but I do not get any disability income other than the widow pension. I do work five hours a week and [inaudible 01:04:30] \$160, and that's my grocery money. My question is, is there any way I can get any kind of employment insurance seeing that I only work part time, like five hours a week?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:04:45):

Okay, thank you for that. I will turn that over to our member of Provincial Parliament, and I'm not sure if Karina would also like to chime in. There's different supports level available at both levels. So over to you first, Jane.

Jane McKenna (01:05:00):

Thanks so much, Mayor. So right now when we did our economic forecast, one thing that you can look at is we gave \$52 million to expand access to the Ontario Works emergency assistance program. It provides financial support to people facing economic hardship, will help more people meet basic needs, such as food and rent during this public health emergency. Again, I'm going to give you my number to our office, which is [905] 639-7924. We've expanded our hours, so we are open from 9:00 to 7:00 PM to answer all these questions. So please feel free to call our office if there's anything else we can help you with.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:05:42):

Thank you. Karina, did you want to chime in there?

Karina Gould (01:05:45):

Yeah, I think, Kim, the best thing that you could do is call Jane's office and call my office. We'll work together to see what we can do to support you. My number is [905] 639-5757. I think for anyone who has those kind of particular questions, just please don't hesitate to give our office a call. Okay? Thanks.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:06:17):

Thank you. The one person we haven't heard yet from tonight that the community may want to hear from is our Fire Chief Dave Lazenby. I know how to say it. The fire department does lead our emergency management response. So maybe you could briefly go over the role of the fire department in our emergency response team that meets daily that I'm a part of, Tim and many others. Go ahead, Dave.

Dave Lazenby (01:06:44):

Yeah, thank you, Mayor Meed Ward. Yes, it's been a busy time for everyone. We're meeting literally seven days a week. We're on teleconference calls twice a day. We have crisis communication calls first thing in the morning with the Mayor and the City Manager and others. Then in the afternoon, our emergency control group meets

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every afternoon to kind of oversee the kind of new inputs that have gone in literally every day. Things are evolving and changing and our plans have to evolve on the back of that.

Dave Lazenby (01:07:14):

In addition to that, we're also as a fire department pretty much like our colleagues in the police service, we're meeting daily, and we're making sure that our frontline staff are equipped and prepared and ready to deal with this changing situation.

Dave Lazenby (01:07:28):

I think I want to reassure the public that our crews are still present and still equipped and delivering the same level of service that they provided before the COVID-19 pandemic hit us. So just want the public to know that the fire service is there for you; and if you need us, we'll respond in the same time as we normally do, equipped and prepared and ready to go.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:07:51):

Thank you. Appreciate that. Back out to another call.

Moderator (01:07:56):

Our next call is going to be from Lindy. Lindy, welcome to the Town Hall. You're joining us live. Hi, Lindy. You're joining us live on the line. Please go ahead with your question.

Wendy (01:08:12):

Is it supposed to be Wendy?

Moderator (01:08:14):

Yes, Wendy. Please, you're joining-

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:08:14):

You're on the air.

Wendy (01:08:15):

Okay. My daughter is expecting her first baby, which we're very excited about, May the 8th. The baby will be born at Joseph Brant Hospital. I'm just wondering what your plan is for women giving birth.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:08:31):

Well, congratulations first, and I'm sure that Dr. Dale Kalina, the Medical Director of Infectious Diseases at Joseph Brant, would be happy to answer that. Go ahead.

Dr. Dale Kalina (01:08:42):

Yes. Congratulations, Wendy. When your daughter comes to Joseph Brant Hospital, presuming that we are still using the same precautions that we are right now, your daughter will be unfortunately limited in terms of the number of visitors she's got; because, of course, we do have a limited visitor policy whereby patients are not allowed to have visitors right now for safety.

Dr. Dale Kalina (01:09:10):

She'll also be protected, because staff members at our hospital, in addition to patients, are wearing masks

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as an effort to help reduce the risk of spread of the virus between other individuals. We are taking the utmost precautions to ensure the safety of our patients when coming to the hospital for any reason, whether it be for an exciting time like a delivery or for a personal health matter. That applies to all patients that are coming for any emergency ambulatory visits, any deliveries, or any other emergencies at this time as well.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:09:47):

Thank you, and I will look to our moderator to see if we have time for one more question.

Moderator (01:09:52):

Unfortunately, Mayor, we're just about reaching the end of the event. We had a lot of questions. With the last couple minutes, were there some concluding remarks you wanted to share?

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:10:02):

For sure. Well, I truly want to thank everyone in our community who is on the call, especially those of you who asked questions and those of you who are waiting patiently to ask a question. If you gave your question to one of our behind-the-scenes folks, we will do our best to get it answered. We will post the questions and answers on our city website, burlington.ca/coronavirus and make sure that all of that information is there. You can still send in a question. The email for that is getinvolved@burlington.ca. You can call it in at (905) 335-7600.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:10:47):

But I'd really like to thank our panelists, the Honorable Karina Gould; our Member of Parliament, Burlington Member of Provincial Parliament, Jane McKenna; our Deputy Police Chief Roger Wilkie; our Superintendent Anthony Odoardi from the Halton Regional Police Service; Eric - Moderator Vandewall, the CEO and President of Joseph Brant Hospital; of course Dr. Dale Kalina, who is the Head of Infectious Diseases at Joseph Brant Hospital; our Fire Chief Dave Lazenby; our City Manager Tim Commisso; and all of our city councillors who joined us on the line, including Councillor Lisa Kearns, Shawna Stolte, Angelo Bentivegna, Kelvin Galbraith, and Rory Nisan. So thanks to all of you.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward (01:11:31):

You can get updates daily, as I mentioned, on our city webpage, and thank you for your questions. Thank you for caring about this issue. Thank you for caring about each other. Please stay home as much as you can. Stay six feet apart. Stay safe and be kind to one another.

Moderator (01:11:53):

Thank you again to everyone for joining us on the Town Hall this evening. If you still have any questions, concerns, or feedback on today's telephone Town Hall, I do want to remind you that you can email those into us at getinvolved@burlington.ca. Again, please email any questions, concerns, and feedback to getinvolved@burlington.ca. Thank you again to everyone for joining us this evening, and have a great night.