

Dear Colleagues and Learners:

A 28-day stay-at-home order came into effect in Ontario at 12:01 a.m. this morning. The Premier announced this order [yesterday](#) along with a new state of emergency declaration; the announcement extends restrictions established in the ongoing province-wide [shutdown](#).

Our campuses will continue to operate, in very limited ways, under these updated restrictions – similar to the stay-at-home order that was in effect at the start of the Winter Term. These new restrictions will not require us to modify our present academic delivery model. (Again, you should not visit campus unless you are a student participating in hands-on instruction or an employee who has been specifically authorized to attend campus in support of these activities.)

The government’s new restrictions – which include limiting non-essential businesses to curbside pickup – come in response to rising COVID-19 case rates, escalating hospital and Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admissions, and the increasing emergence of variants of concern.

“The Third Wave is different than anything we have experienced so far... the risks are greater; the stakes are higher,” the Premier said, “The COVID-19 situation is at a critical stage and we must act quickly and decisively to stay ahead of these deadly new variants.”

As a reminder, you can monitor cases on the College’s campuses [here](#). The College has seen relatively few COVID-19 cases related to our campuses throughout the pandemic and I want to thank those required to come to campus for continuing to follow our health and safety guidelines, and helping to ensure continued operations are as safe as possible.

I discussed ongoing restrictions within our academic spaces in last week’s [message](#). Any additional changes to course delivery – including placements and labs – will be communicated on a program-by-program basis as required. You can also review the current state of restrictions on our campuses’ services [here](#).

Earlier this week, Dr. Vera Etches, Ottawa’s Medical Officer of Health, supported additional measures being implemented stating that, “the COVID situation in Ottawa is concerning and we need further restrictions to bend the curve. Younger people are being hospitalized in Ontario. ICU admissions are increasing. Cases are too high in our city.”

The stark warning is a reminder that COVID-19 knows no boundaries, and the variants currently circulating in our community are easily transmitted and affect young and older people alike. While it is encouraging to see the increasing pace of the vaccine roll-out across Ontario, our adherence to public health guidelines – practicing physical distancing, wearing masks, washing our hands and staying at home – remain critically important.

We have all experienced fatigue in dealing with the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, but the progress on vaccinations is finally offering everyone hope. (For more information on the vaccine rollout in our campus communities, see my [previous message](#).) Thank you for your continued strength, patience and flexibility as we continue to make progress together.

Finally, to our College's Muslim community, I wish a happy, safe celebration to all those marking the Ramadan holiday starting Tuesday, April 13.

As always, stay well everyone.

Sincerely,

Claude Brulé
President, CEO
Algonquin College