



Statement from Halton's Mayors and Regional Chair on Measures to Combat COVID-19

April 22, 2021

Halton's Mayors and Regional Chair stand with the [guidance provided by the COVID-19 Science Advisory Table for Ontario](#) supporting sick pay, encouraging safe outdoor activities and accelerating vaccines for essential workers, among other measures to fight COVID-19.

Throughout this pandemic, Halton's Mayors and Regional Chair have advocated for a targeted and evidence-based approach and believe that measures should target the sources of community spread.

On behalf of all our residents and businesses hanging on during these challenging times, we add our voices to the call from the Science Table to:

- Permit only truly essential indoor workplaces to stay open and strictly enforce safety measures;
- Pay essential workers to stay home when they are sick, exposed or need time to get vaccinated;
- Accelerate vaccination of essential workers and those who live in hot spots; and
- Encourage safe outdoor activities.

The guidance from the Science Table is that being safe outdoors means allowing small groups of people from different households to meet outside with masking and two-metre distancing. It means keeping playgrounds open and clearly encouraging safe outdoor activities.

While we continue to discourage large gatherings, small groups can be at the same amenity at the same time as long as they are following the health guidelines.

In light of this advice, we ask the Province to review and reconsider the list of currently prohibited outdoor activities. As noted by the Science Table:

"Policies that discourage safe outdoor activity will not control COVID-19 and will disproportionately harm children and those who do not have access to their own greenspace, especially those living in crowded conditions."

Regarding closing non-essential businesses, further financial supports for workers must be in place if the government is considering closing additional workplaces.

Yesterday's comments regarding paid sick days by Labour Minister Monte McNaughton, Government House Leader Minister Paul Calandra, Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy and Deputy Premier Christine Elliot are welcome but they need to be backed up by urgent action and implementation, as well as a timeline. To avert a fourth wave and break this cycle of lockdowns and restrictions, the government needs to launch and fund a paid sick leave program in the coming days.

In addition, the Ministry of Labour should have further resources and staff allocated to increase inspection blitzes and enforce safety measures. These blitzes should not be advertised or announced

ahead of time, and they should target the facilities that have had multiple outbreaks and employers that have not followed public health guidelines.

We need to focus on measures that work, backed by science and evidence, to get through this Third Wave and plan for recovery.

Sincerely,

Halton Regional Chair, Gary Carr

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward, City of Burlington

Mayor Rob Burton, Town of Oakville

Mayor Gordon Krantz, Town of Milton

Mayor Rick Bonnette, Town of Halton Hills

Additional information:

- [COVID-19 Science Advisory Table for Ontario Brief – Fighting COVID-19 in Ontario: The Way Forward](#)

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