

# MEDIA RELEASE

**EMBARGOED until 1pm CST - Nov. 27, 2020**

## NWHU Region Moving to COVID-19 “YELLOW-PROTECT” Level

In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) region has moved to the “Yellow – Protect” level of the Ontario Government’s Keeping Ontario Safe and Open Framework. The shift to this level comes after a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases in the Kenora region over the past week.

The new level for the region requires the implementation of stronger measures including requiring safety plans for some businesses, targeted enforcement, fines, and enhanced education to limit the transmission of COVID-19. Some of the restrictions in the yellow level include:

- Some businesses now require a safety plan. This must be a written plan that includes things like screening employees, ensuring people maintain at least 2 metres between themselves, disinfecting surfaces and objects, and supporting hand hygiene. The Government of Ontario has a template to help employers create a safety plan.
- Food establishments and bars must be closed between 12 a.m. and 5 a.m., and no more than six people can sit together.
- Liquor can only be sold or served between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. and cannot be consumed in establishments between 12 a.m. and 9 a.m.
- Contact information must be collected from all patrons in settings such as restaurants, personal care service settings, meeting spaces, recreation facilities, and bingo halls.
- Patrons of sports and recreational facilities must be at least 3 metres apart where there are weights/weight machines and in exercise classes. Programs are limited to 10 people per room inside and 25 people outside. Preregistration or appointments are required.

To find out which types of businesses require a safety plan, visit the Government of Ontario’s COVID-19 Response Framework – Protect. To help businesses meet this new requirement, NWHU is contacting affected employers with further information and also expanding their hotline hours for the weekend. Health unit staff will be available until 8 p.m. November 27, and from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on November 28 to answer questions that employers may have.

Dr. Kit Young Hoon, Medical Officer of Health at NWHU reminds the public that on top of the new measures put in place for the area, we must also remain vigilant in our personal preventive practises. “To stay safe, limit your number of close contacts, stay 2 metres from anyone not in your household, wash your hands frequently, and stay home when you are feeling unwell”, she says. “If we do not act now, we face the possibility of further restrictions being placed on us during the holiday season,” warns Dr. Young Hoon.

For more information about the new restrictions, see the Government of Ontario's COVID-19 Response Framework – Protect page or call NWHU's COVID-19 hotline at 1-866-468-2240.

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