

MEDIA RELEASE

March 17, 2022

Masking still recommended

The Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) region's COVID-19 rates are starting to improve, even with the lifting of restrictions, however, our area's case rate remains the highest in the province. We currently have a case rate of 294.3 per 100,000, compared to 75.0 per 100,000 provincially; and the local percent positivity rate is 19.1%, while Ontario's is 10.2%.

"Evidence shows that masking provides an additional layer of protection and is effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19," says Dr. Young Hoon, Medical Officer of Health at NWHU. "One should consider the benefits of masking and the higher risk in our region when making the decision on whether to wear a mask in indoor public settings," she says.

Some people are at higher risk of severe outcomes from a COVID-19 infection, including older adults, immunocompromised, unvaccinated, or those with other health conditions. As restrictions are lifted, assessing personal risk and the risk of those you gather with is important when making decisions about the protective measures you follow. To lower your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19, NWHU recommends limiting the number of people at indoor gatherings, practising physical distancing in indoor public settings, and staying home when feeling unwell.

Masking is still required in some settings and may be encouraged in some workplaces. Close contacts are also expected to mask for a period of time. The public is encouraged to show kindness and respect to those who choose to continue to wear a mask after the mandate is lifted.

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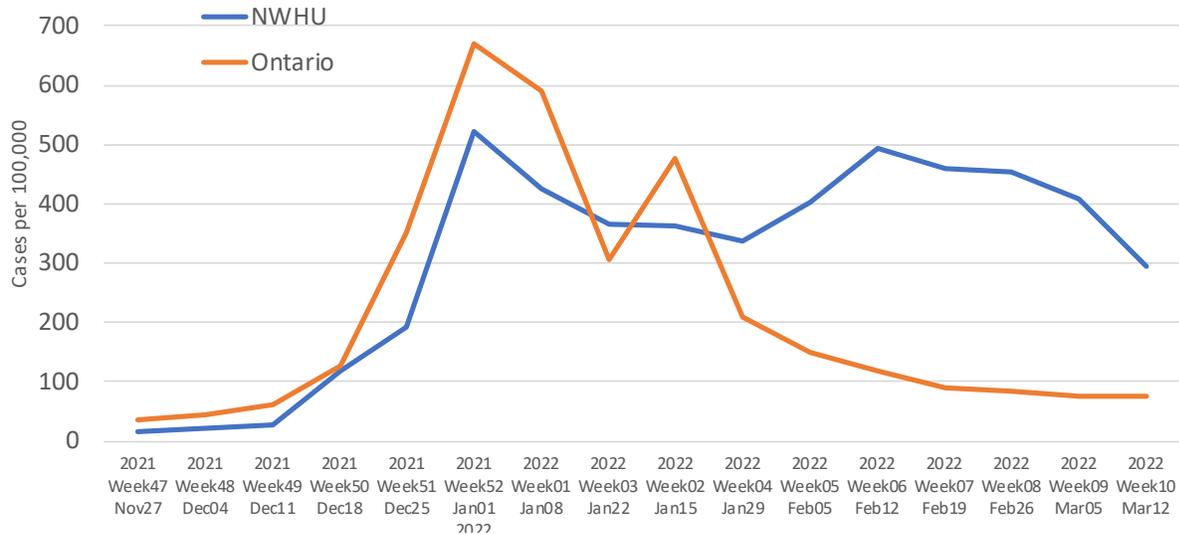
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Additional Information

The NWHU region's 7-day positive case rate is 294.3 per 100,000 while Ontario sits at 75.0 per 100,000.

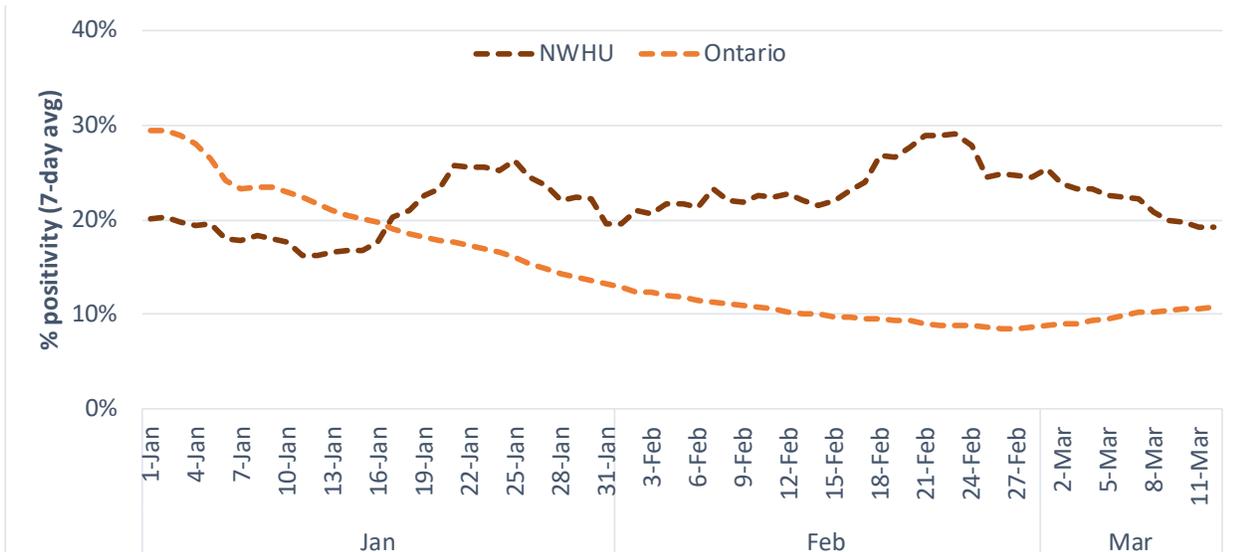
COVID-19 confirmed cases per 100,000 per week, NWHU and Ontario



Data Source: Capacity Planning and Analytics Division. Visual Analytics Hub. Date Extracted: March 14, 2022

NWHU's 7-day average percent positivity rate is significantly higher than the province, which is 19.1% vs the province's declining rate, currently sitting at 10.2%.

7-day average percent positivity, NWHU and Ontario



Data Source: Capacity Planning and Analytics Division. Visual Analytics Hub. Date Extracted: March 14, 2022