



*City of Sarnia*

**MEDIA RELEASE**

DATE: April 22, 2020                      RELEASE DATE: Immediate

FROM: City of Sarnia Primary Control Group

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update – April 22

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The Sarnia Primary Control Group met via teleconference on April 22, 2020, at 9:15 am regarding developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic and, as of that time, received confirmation that the number of deaths connected to the COVID-19 pandemic within the Sarnia-Lambton area remains at 14, and the number of confirmed cases increased to 150. The number of confirmed institutional outbreaks remains at 2 with Landmark Village located in Sarnia and Lambton Meadowview Villa located in Petrolia.

The Government of Ontario has confirmed that enhanced public health measures, including requesting that people stay home except for essential trips and physically distance from each other when outside, is starting to work to contain the spread of the virus and is allowing our communities to flatten the curve, but it continues to believe that the loosening of these measures at this time may be premature. This position is confirmed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health who indicated that he believes that these emergency measures continue to be critical to our ability to continue to reduce the number of cases and deaths resulting from COVID-19.

A key objective of the COVID-19 Action Plan is now to protect our most vulnerable population by preventing further outbreaks and deaths within long-term care facilities through aggressive testing, screening and surveillance within these facilities. In light of this, it has now been confirmed that a ramp up of local testing has started in direct response to the Premier's call-to-action on increased testing in long term care and retirement homes.

Despite the increase in the number of tests being completed, because Lambton Public Health and Bluewater Health need to continue to focus their efforts on containing outbreaks within our local long term care facilities, priority is to report positive test results and we may experience delays in the confirmation of the amount of negative results we will receive over the coming days.

The City has had great success with the COVID-19 reporting hotline, and by continuing to work together through these difficult times, we will stop the spread of COVID-19. By-Law Enforcement has received the following number of complaints and concerns lodged through the COVID-19 reporting system to date:

- Total number of complaints received: 635
- Total number of emails received: 539
- Total number of phone calls received: 96
- Total number of charges laid: 3

Please note the above numbers do not include calls that were received through the Sarnia Police Services and dispatched to By-Law Staff or investigated by the Sarnia Police Services.

The City would like to thank the members of our community who are staying home and who continue to practice physical distancing as your collective actions are what has allowed our community to make significant progress in our fight to contain the impact of this deadly virus within our community and your continued efforts will ensure that we will be able to get back to a form of normalcy sooner rather than later.

We would like to remind the public of the fact that Lambton Public Health is currently asking for the public's help with their initiative to contact trace potential exposure of members of the public to COVID-19 after a local Taxi Driver tested positive for the Novel Coronavirus. Anyone who used Greg's Taxi service on April 1, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 10 is urged to contact Lambton Public Health at 519-383-8331 so that public health officials can investigate the level of risk of exposure to them and offer guidance as appropriate.

While the state of emergency remains in effect, we remind you the closure of all non-essential workplaces, outdoor amenities such as parks and recreational areas, public places, bars and restaurants, the boat launch at Sarnia Bay within Centennial Park, as well as restrictions on social gatherings of more than five people, and prohibitions against price-gouging will continue to be enforced by both the City of Sarnia and Sarnia Police Services.

Transit has begun operating a Sunday level bus service from Monday to Saturday. The modified weekday bus schedule will still begin at 6:30 am and evening service will continue to operate. No changes are being made to existing Sunday bus service or start time.

The main differences between the new weekday schedule and existing Sunday schedule are:

- One Route 9 Bus will cease operating at 7:30pm
- Route 10 and 12 will continue to operate
- Route 15 (specific hours to be posted online and at the terminal)
- Route 14 (No Walmart Service – nearest stop will be at Barclay/Quinn)

#### COVID-19 Community Concerns:

The service allows the public to file anonymous concerns or provide tips relating to businesses or individuals who may be in violation of Provincial Orders regarding a range of COVID-19 concerns, including:

- Physical distancing relating to private property;
- Non-essential businesses operating in contravention of Provincial Orders;
- Individuals returning to Ontario from outside the Country that are failing to follow Quarantine or self-isolation measures;
- Businesses not taking the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials regarding physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting; and/or
- Individuals and families using park spaces and trails throughout the City.

#### Contact Us:

The COVID-19 email reporting service is monitored daily including nights and weekends to provide the best available response to public concerns and we continue to encourage residents to email us at [covid@sarnia.ca](mailto:covid@sarnia.ca)

The phone line is available Monday to Friday, excluding holidays, from 8:30am – 4:30pm and all messages received after hours are cleared the next business day. The number is 1-877-4-SARNIA (1-877-472-7642).

#### Key Reminders:

- Physical distancing measures by keeping a safe distance of at least 2 metres from others are recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and are only enforceable where there are social gatherings of more than 5 people in a public or private place. This does not apply to a gathering of members of a single household;

- Physical distancing is an essential way to slow down the spread of COVID-19. It's important that we all continue to follow the physical distancing recommendations of The Chief Medical Officer of Health, whether you're in one of the high-risk groups or not;
- Adopting safe hygiene practices such as regularly washing our hands, and not touching our faces will significantly help reduce the impact and spread of this pandemic; and
- On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Ontario and with the approval of the Ontario Legislature, the Government of Ontario passed Bill 189, the *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Support and Protection Act*, to extend the State of Emergency for a further period of 28 days, ensuring that all emergency orders issued by the Province that are currently in effect will remain in effect until May 12, 2020.

The City of Sarnia and Sarnia Police Services will continue to enforce these orders and directives and those who are found to violate these risk having charges laid against them.

Given the rapidly changing situation, we would like to refer concerned community members to the websites for Bluewater Health and for Lambton Public Health for up to date information on the COVID-19 Virus, including the number of active cases within our community:

Bluewater Health:

- <https://www.bluewaterhealth.ca/covid-19-information>

Lambton Public Health:

- <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus/>

If you think you may have COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in close contact with someone who you believe may have been infected, first self-isolate and then use [Ontario's Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if you need to seek further care.

To listen to a detailed listing of City of Sarnia closures and disruptions, you are encouraged to call our City of Sarnia Services Update Line at 226-778-4611 which will be updated daily.

### **Lambton Public Health Information:**

If you are experiencing symptoms and have traveled internationally, please call your health care provider or Lambton Public Health (519-383-8331) or <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/> (Please do not call 9-1-1 unless it is an emergency).

The Primary Control Group will continue to meet daily to ensure that all new and relevant information is being taken into consideration going forward. Daily public notifications will be issued. Please visit the City's website [www.sarnia.ca](http://www.sarnia.ca), Facebook, and/or Twitter for updates.

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**For further information, please contact:**

**City of Sarnia COVID-19 Hotline**

1-877-4-SARNIA (1-877-472-7642) or 519-332-0932

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