



City of Sarnia

**MEDIA RELEASE**

DATE: April 24, 2020 RELEASE DATE: Immediate

FROM: City of Sarnia Primary Control Group

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update – April 24

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The Sarnia Primary Control Group met via teleconference on April 24, 2020, at 9:00 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 has risen 164. The number of confirmed institutional outbreaks remains at 2. Despite the outbreak at Meadowview Villa located in Petrolia having ended, a new outbreak was declared at Vision Nursing Home located in Sarnia which now joins Landmark Village also located in Sarnia.

On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government is extending a series of emergency orders that have been adopted under s.7.0.2 (4) of the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* to stop the spread of COVID-19 within our communities until May 6, 2020. A link to the orders can be found at the following web site: <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/04/ontario-extends-emergency-orders-to-help-stop-the-spread-of-covid-19.html>

In response to community questions about whether lawn care, landscaping and lawn maintenance businesses are essential services that are exempt from the application of O. Reg. 82/20 adopted by the Government of Ontario that requires the closure of all non-essential businesses, the City would like to refer businesses who have questions about the Provincial list of essential workplaces to the Province's "Stop the Spread" Business Information Line at 1-888-444-3659 or access the information made available by the province through the Internet: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces>

We remind all businesses and individual operators that they are required to continue to follow all of the health directives adopted by Lambton Public Health at all times to stop the spread of COVID-19. These directives can be accessed through the Internet: <https://lambtonpublichealth.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus/workplaces>

Please note that the City is intending to reopen the compost site as of Monday, May 4th, 2020 and will provide further details relative to the hours of operations and conditions for use as soon as these become available.

Although, 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, as the virus is still actively present in the community. 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, 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. Although, it may be alarming that the number of confirmed cases may rise drastically over the coming days, we would like to remind the community that this is due to the increase in the number of tests being completed.

Please note Transit has begun operating a Sunday level bus service from Monday to Saturday. No changes are being made to existing Sunday bus service or start time.

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: 674
- Total number of emails received: 575

- Total number of phone calls received: 99
- 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.

#### 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.

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.

- 30 -

**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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