



Services de santé du

**TIMISKAMING**

Health Unit

*Enhancing your health in so many ways.*

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December 16, 2021

To: Individuals and Workplaces in Timiskaming Health Unit district

**RE: Letter of Recommendation**

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Cases of COVID-19 are rising across the province and are at high levels throughout the communities served by the Timiskaming Health Unit. This provincial rise in cases coincides with the recent identification of the Omicron variant of concern in Ontario, the upcoming holiday season, and the anticipated high number of private social gatherings. To control cases and the impact on our health care system, we need to increase vaccination and continue to use public health measures to reduce transmission now.

It is critically important to reduce opportunities for transmission before our health care system is overwhelmed. This letter provides strong recommendations that apply to every resident within the communities we serve. The particular focus is on private social gatherings in indoor environments. Experience and Science Table modeling have shown that decreasing the number of contacts can significantly reduce transmission.

The holiday season is peak social gathering time in the region. Most households plan more than one multi-family gathering during the last two weeks of December.

By reducing our number of close contacts, we can prevent serious illness and hospitalization in those who are most vulnerable to infection.

Finally, when we are not socializing, we are at work. Employees are at risk whenever they work in close contact with others.

Therefore, we strongly recommend:

1. Everyone should limit social gatherings at private dwellings to no more than 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors. All attendees 12 years of age and older should be vaccinated.
2. All unvaccinated individuals 12 years of age and older should avoid any non-essential indoor contact with individuals who are not part of their household.
3. Where possible, individuals should work remotely.

***These recommendations are effective immediately and will be reassessed in four weeks' time.***

The COVID-19 vaccines provide a high level of protection against serious illness, hospitalization, and death. Anyone who is eligible for their third dose should get their shot urgently. However, vaccines cannot do this work alone. A layered approach to applying public health measures is required.

This Letter of Recommendation is applicable to every resident in our communities; everyone has a role to play in reducing virus transmission and keeping themselves, their families, and their communities safer during what we hope will still be a joyful time of year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glenn Corneil, B.Sc., M.D., C.C.F.P., F.C.F.P.  
Acting Medical Officer of Health/CEO