

Letter to the community

FROM: Dr. Ian Arra, Medical Officer of Health & Chief Executive Officer

DATE: March 17, 2022

RE: Response to COVID-19 pandemic

Two years ago this week, the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in Grey-Bruce and the government of Ontario declared a state of emergency, effectively marking the start of the pandemic both locally and provincially.

We've come so far over the course of the pandemic and are now at a point where nearly all public health measures have been lifted and municipal states of emergency have come to an end.

Through it all, residents, community partners and organizations, municipalities and businesses in Grey-Bruce demonstrated a commendable commitment to public health requirements and guidelines and did everything possible to help curb the virus's spread, protect the most vulnerable from getting sick and keep everyone safe. The community's positive response to our call for the critical threshold was one of the many examples of our collective commitment. Another example is the region's success in leading the way with a paradigm-changing vaccine distribution process that is being studied and used as a benchmark across the country.

We practiced the three Ws – washing our hands, watching our distance and wearing a mask. We respected gathering limits, postponed events, stayed home and worked from our residences, when required.

We got tested for COVID-19 and, most importantly, got vaccinated against the virus.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone in Grey-Bruce for these incredible efforts.

Thank you to the front-line health care workers and first responders who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic. Thank you to the teachers and students who pivoted several times during the pandemic from classroom to remote learning.

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Thank you to the local political leaders –municipal and provincial –and their staff who enacted emergency orders and put in place other measures to protect their residents. Thank you to the media and community partners for helping public health to communicate our directives, guidelines and advice to the broader Grey-Bruce community. Information accuracy and timeliness, a function of credible media, has been indispensable to ensure individuals make informed decisions to protect themselves, their families, and the community at large.

Thank you to the long-term care residents and other vulnerable people who had to be isolated and away from their loved ones for prolonged periods of time, including special occasions, to help prevent the virus' spread.

Thank you to the businesses and organizations who followed public health guidelines throughout the pandemic.

Thank you to the professional, hard-working Grey Bruce Health Unit team, which collaborated to deliver a second-to-none public health emergency response. We have been able to contain cases and deaths to an extremely limited number relative to other jurisdictions, and taken steps to protect our most vulnerable populations.

Our Board of Health has played a leading role in the public health response and I am grateful for their leadership and support during this difficult time.

Thank you to all the stakeholders and groups that are not listed here.

We are at this relatively positive point in the pandemic because of the sacrifices everyone made and the measures you took to safeguard not only yourselves and your families but your communities as well.

Yours very truly,

Ian

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