

King, York enter into Stage 2 of reopening

By **Mark Pavilons**

King and York Region is joining other areas in moving into Stage 2 of the province's move to reopen businesses. People can enjoy their favourite patio as additional businesses and services in certain regions across Ontario begin reopening this Friday. The Ontario government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and local medical officers of health, is enabling more regions of the province to enter Stage 2 of the government's reopening framework. These regions are able to reopen due to positive trends of key public health indicators at the local level, including lower transmission of COVID-19, sufficient hospital health system capacity, local public health capacity to assist with rapid case and contact management, and a significant increase in testing provincially. The details were provided by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance, Vic Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation, and Trade, and Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Tourism, Culture, and Sport Industries. Informed by public health advice and workplace safety guidance, and supported by the collective efforts of businesses, workers and families to limit the potential spread of the virus, the latest public health unit regions allowed to move into Stage 2 on Friday, June 19, at 12:01 a.m. include York Region Public Health Services. These regions are in addition to the 24 public health regions that entered Stage 2 on June 12. Before opening, business owners need to review the workplace safety guidelines and public health advice. "Thanks to the collective efforts of our frontline health care workers and the people in these regions to stop the spread of COVID-19, more businesses will be able to open their doors and thousands of people will be able to go back to work and put food on the table," said Premier Ford. "With the public health trends improving day by day across the province, I am hopeful all regions of Ontario will enter Stage 2 very soon. But we must remain on our guard to prevent any potential surge or secondary wave by continuing to follow the sound advice of our public health officials. The following regions will remain in Stage 1 under ongoing assessment until trends of key public health indicators demonstrate readiness to move into Stage 2: Peel Public Health (which includes Caledon); Toronto Public Health; and Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. Opening more regions of Ontario is another positive sign that we are making steady progress in our collective efforts to contain this deadly virus," said Minister Elliott. "As many more Ontarians begin to work, shop and interact with others, it's never been more important that we continue to follow public health advice, especially physical distancing with anyone outside of our social circle, so we can soon successfully and safely move into Stage 3. Public health remains the government's top priority. All Ontarians must continue to follow public health advice, including practising physical distancing, wearing a face covering if physical distancing is a challenge, washing hands frequently and thoroughly, and avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth. If you think you have COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, get tested. The Chief Medical Officer of Health and health experts will continue to closely monitor the evolving situation to advise when public health restrictions can be gradually loosened or if they need to be tightened. At the beginning of each week, the government is providing an update on the ongoing assessment of Ontario's regions, and whether they are ready to move into Stage 2 at the end of the week. To get tested, people should visit Ontario's website to find their local assessment centre and whether they need to call ahead to make an appointment. The province has developed a practical step-by-step guide to help Ontarians as they safely develop and join a social circle.