

York stresses vaccines needed to enter sports facilities

York Region has issued a letter to owners/operators of facilities where organized sports are played and/or practiced regarding vaccinations. Everyone 12 and older attending or participating in sports at arenas are required to provide identification and proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or a valid medical exemption. This decision was made in response to current data and Scarsin modelling which projects York Region could see up to: 430 cases of COVID-19 per day by December. 44 hospitalizations of those under the age of 19 by Dec. 31. Further data suggests of the 10 outbreaks related specifically to basketball tournaments or events from Feb. 20 to Sept. 20, one in five cases were linked to York Region and two-thirds of the cases were under the age of 18. In the most recent week, the rate of infection among unvaccinated individuals 12 years of age or older was 137.1 cases per 100,000 population; in contrast, among fully vaccinated individuals the rate was significantly lower at 14.5 cases per 100,000 population. In the past two months, almost all COVID-19 related deaths and hospitalizations have occurred in individuals who were not vaccinated or partially vaccinated. Activities related to organized sports have the potential to enhance COVID-19 transmission; specifically, close contact, forceful exhalation, prolonged exposure, crowded indoor spaces and masks and face coverings removed during physical activity contribute to enhanced likelihood of COVID-19 transmission. We recognize this requirement may cause inconvenience for some residents, businesses and sports organizations, however, the good news is most York Region residents age 12 to 17 are already vaccinated; in fact, 75% of York Region youth aged 12 to 17 are fully vaccinated and 82% have received a first dose, said a statement from York Region. Everyone over the age of 12 (born in 2009 or earlier) is encouraged to get fully vaccinated as soon as possible. COVID-19 vaccination clinic dates, times and locations are available at york.ca/covid19vaccine