



# COMMUNICATION UPDATE

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members Board of Health
<b>DATE:</b>	November 29, 2022
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Scarsin Forecast Update Frequency Effective November 30, 2022
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services <i>E. Richardson</i>
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

Scarsin COVID-19 forecasting has been a tool utilized by Hamilton Public Health Services and its healthcare partners since February 2021 to understand the potential future trajectory of COVID-19 in Hamilton. This forecasting has been presented at to the Board of Health since April 19, 2021 and has been published to the City's Respiratory Virus Transmission Status section online (<https://www.hamilton.ca/people-programs/public-health/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-covid/covid-19-data#transmission-status>) biweekly on Wednesdays since July 2022. The next scheduled date for publishing Scarsin COVID-19 forecasting was November 30, 2022.

Hamilton Public Health Services is currently reviewing the effectiveness of Scarsin COVID-19 forecasting in the context of a number of respiratory illnesses circulating in Hamilton, including COVID-19, influenza and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus). What we've seen recently is the many factors that help to determine the level of COVID-19 spread and the Scarsin forecasting have become more complex – including the relationship with the rise and competition of other respiratory viruses that may be reducing the spread of COVID-19. As a result, Scarsin COVID-19 forecasting will not be published on the City's Respiratory Virus Transmission Status in Hamilton until further notice. A note will be added to the applicable webpage to this end.

Hamilton Public Health Services will continue to update its Respiratory Virus Transmission Status on Wednesdays at the link above (where community members can understand trends related to the presence of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, and how individuals can layer up and protect themselves. This tool is especially important with a triple threat of respiratory illnesses – RSV, influenza, and COVID-19 – currently circulating in our community. In terms of layering up against these threats, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and Hamilton Public Health Services strongly recommend individuals wear a mask in all indoor settings to protect those who are most

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vulnerable – young children, the elderly, and those who are immunocompromised. Masking works and masking indoors is critical as the spread of respiratory illnesses will increase in the weeks ahead and the risk of infection will intensify. In addition to wearing a well-fitted mask indoors, it's also important for community members to get a flu shot (<https://hamilton.ca/people-programs/public-health/vaccines-immunizations/flu-clinics>), stay up-to-date with your COVID-19 vaccination (<https://hamilton.ca/people-programs/public-health/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-covid/covid-19-vaccine>), screen for respiratory symptoms daily, stay at home if you're feeling sick, wash your hands and clean high-touch surfaces regularly.

The City of Hamilton is committed to transparency and sharing relevant and timely respiratory illness analysis with the community. Additional updates related to Scarsin COVID-19 forecasting will be shared with the Board of Health as soon as Hamilton Public Health Services has completed its review.

Should you have any questions related to the above information, please contact Dr. Bart Harvey, Associate Medical Officer of Health at (905) 546-2424, Ext. 3571 or [Bart.Harvey@hamilton.ca](mailto:Bart.Harvey@hamilton.ca).

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Not Applicable.