

A Timeline of COVID-19 in Ontario January 2020 - May 2021



A rapid-test kit is shown above with a positive COVID-19 test (2 bars) and a negative test (1 bar). Test kits were available free from health units, clinics, pharmacies, and grocery stores to enable people to test at home before traveling and going to work. In Ontario, over 264 million test kits were received for free distribution.

Locally, the effect of the COVID-19 virus was profound. The economy slowed, people didn't travel, social gatherings were largely eliminated, and meetings were canceled. Local Council meetings went online with the purchase of online streaming equipment so ratepayers could view proceedings 'live'.

The use of Zoom live-streaming video became the new normal for communication to limit physical contact and travel. The MTO used illuminated road signs on Highway #7 requesting people to **Stay Home**.



Mask-wearing was mandated in businesses and public places. In our local pharmacy, a take-out window was used for patients picking up prescriptions making entrance into the pharmacy restricted.

Doctors at Lakelands Family Health Team adopted telephone appointments to limit personal contact. Masks were mandatory within the clinics.

Schools were closed and then reopened with restrictions. Students wore masks the best they could in addition to teachers and staff. Anyone with symptoms was asked to stay at home.

There was an increase in our population as city dwellers looked to move to rural areas. Property values significantly increased as demand for rural properties grew. Class sizes in NAEC increased as families moved to Addington Highlands and North Frontenac Townships. Many parents could work remotely from home making the move to the country economically feasible.

Some businesses did very well during the pandemic. Northbrook Foodland saw an increase in business although the challenges of keeping staff safe were constant. Plexiglas barriers were installed to keep the cashiers protected. This practice continued in other retail outlets. The lumberyards did well because people moving and renovating their cottages needed building supplies. Restaurants did less well as people were cautious about eating out and remained that way into 2023. Coupled with increased food prices and higher interest rates many local businesses and residents found the pandemic financially challenging.

As of December 19, 2023, Health Canada has reported 4,855,902 cases of COVID-19 in Ontario and 56,787 associated deaths. The number of cases is likely much higher as most are now unrecorded plus several people experience the virus more than once.

THE TIMELINE

Kevin Nielsen of Global News documented the progression of the virus in Ontario in this document which has been reproduced on the CDHS website with the addition of local photos by Ken Hook.

By [Kevin Nielsen](#) Global News

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Jan. 25, 2020: The first presumptive case is reported in Ontario (and Canada) when a man in his 50s, who came from Wuhan, China, feels minor symptoms. He then calls 911 and is placed in isolation at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto.

Jan. 31, 2020: Ontario's third case of the new coronavirus is confirmed involving a London university student in her 20s who had traveled to China. She initially tested negative for the virus, but a subsequent test at the national lab in Winnipeg came back positive.

Feb. 12, 2020: Ontario health officials clear the London woman of the novel coronavirus. She becomes the first case to be resolved in Ontario (and Canada).

Feb. 26, 2020: Ontario announces a fifth diagnosis in the province: a woman in her 60s who recently traveled to Iran. Her husband catches the virus from her, becoming the first case of human-to-human transmission in the province.

March 11, 2020: A **77-year-old Barrie man dies**, becoming Ontario's first death attributed to COVID-19. He tested positive for the virus after coming in close contact with another positive case.

March 12, 2020: Ontario Premier Doug Ford announces that publicly funded schools across the province will be closed for two weeks following March break. While announcing the decision, the Ontario premier also tells families to **"travel" and "have fun"** on March break. Ontario also announces 17 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number to 59.



Figure 1: North Addington Education Centre Closed March 14 – April 5 – Cloyne, April 8, 2020

March 14, 2020: Canadians who are out of the country **are strongly urged** by the federal government to return home as "new restrictions may be imposed with little warning." Previously, the feds had urged Canadians to cancel or postpone non-essential trips.

March 16, 2020: The province **recommends the closure** of all recreation programs, libraries, private schools, daycares, churches, and other faith settings, as well as bars and restaurants, except those that offer takeout or delivery.



Figure 2: Cloyne Public Library Door April 8, 2020

March 17, 2020: Ford declares a state of emergency in Ontario while ordering some businesses to be closed, including daycares, bars and restaurants, theatres, and private schools.

March 18, 2020: Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces an agreement between Canada and the U.S. restricting all non-essential travel across the border.

March 19, 2020: A **51-year-old Milton man** becomes the second person to die of COVID-19 in Ontario. It is believed he caught the virus through local transmission.

March 19, 2020: The Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks **shutters provincial parks** until April 30 to protect the health of employees and visitors.

March 19, 2020: Ontario health officials say there are 43 new cases of the novel coronavirus. The **provincial total now jumps to 250 active cases.**

March 20, 2020: An outbreak is declared at Pinecrest Nursing Home in Bobcaygeon. By April 9, 29 residents, along with a spouse of a resident, would die of COVID-19 complications. The scene would be repeated at long-term care homes across the province.



Figure 3 Cloyne Post Office March 22, 2020

March 23, 2020: Ford orders the closure of all non-essential businesses across the province for 14 days. Some are surprised when the list of businesses to close does not include liquor stores, construction projects, and realty services.

March 24, 2020: Ontario health officials confirm 85 new COVID-19 cases and two more deaths, bringing the **provincial total to 572 active cases.** Eight people have died from the virus, while eight others have been cleared.



Figure 4 Lakelands Family Health Team - March 22, 2020

March 26, 2020: Warden Marg Isbester declared a State of Emergency for the County of Lennox and Addington.

March 27, 2020: The Ford government issues **an emergency alert** to people's phones in an attempt to warn recent travelers to self-isolate for 14 days.

March 30, 2020: The province orders the **shutdown of all outdoor amenities** while also extending the emergency order through April 12.

March 31, 2020: The province announces that Ontario schools will remain closed until at least May.

April 3, 2020: The **province releases its first projections**, saying there could be just under 1,600 COVID-19 deaths and 80,000 cases by the end of April if the current measures in place are upheld. The province also extends the list of non-essential businesses that must close, including **non-critical industrial construction projects**. Metrolinx, which manages transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, announces further reduced service for GO Transit after a **90 percent drop in ridership**.



Figure 5 Foodland Northbrook - March 21, 2020

April 6, 2020: The first **COVID-19 case surfaces** in a northwestern Ontario Indigenous community, prompting calls for a military hospital to be set up.

April 8, 2020: Ontario reports 550 new cases of the novel **coronavirus** and 21 more deaths, bringing the **provincial total to 5,276 cases and 174 deaths**. Provincial officials also report that 2,074 patients have recovered from the virus.

April 8, 2020: Ontario orders **grocery stores and pharmacies** to be closed on Friday and Sunday of the holiday weekend across the province in an effort to ensure employees get a breather.

April 14, 2020: Ontario extends the **state of emergency for another four weeks** and pledges further resources to long-term care homes, which have become the epicentre of the crisis in the province.

April 18, 2020: Provincial officials report 485 new cases and 36 new deaths, **bringing provincial totals to 10,010 and 514, respectively**.

April 20, 2020: The Ontario government **modeling**, which shows that community spread may have peaked across the province, but officials also warn that numbers continue to grow in long-term care homes, retirement homes, and other congregate settings.



Figure 6 Hook's Castle Building Supplies, Cloyne, April 8, 2020

April 23, 2020: Ford **confirms his mother-in-law**, who is a resident of a Toronto long-term care home, has tested positive for COVID-19.

April 26, 2020: Education Minister Stephen Lecce announces **that publicly funded schools** will be closed until at least May 31.

April 27, 2020: Ford provides **the framework** in which he will reopen the province although he does not commit to a date for when it will get underway.

April 28, 2020: Ontario **reports 525 new cases** of the novel coronavirus bringing the provincial total to 15,381 cases. A total of 8,964 people have also recovered from **COVID-19**, the disease caused by the virus, which is 58.3 percent of cases.

May 1, 2020: The Ontario government **announces that some seasonal businesses** (including nurseries) and some essential construction projects can open on May 4 if they follow strict guidelines.



Figure 7 BMO Northbrook March 21, 2020

May 6, 2020: **Emergency orders are extended** by the province for the third time. They will now continue until May 19, which will extend them past Victoria Day weekend.

May 6, 2020: Ontario **government announces** that beginning on May 9, it will allow garden centres and nurseries to open. A day later, hardware and safety supply stores can open. The following Monday, retail stores with a street entrance will be allowed to provide curbside pick-up and delivery only.

May 9, 2020: The **Province announces** that beginning on May 11, residents are allowed to walk, hike, bike, and bird watch in provincial parks. Camping and access to beaches will remain closed.

May 10, 2020: **Ontario reports 294 new cases** of the novel coronavirus, bringing the total number of cases in the province to 20,238. The 294 cases are the lowest increase daily increase announced since March 31.

May 14, 2020: Ford provides details on **the province's first stage of its "Phase 2: Restart."** Some businesses are allowed to open on May 16

including campgrounds, marinas, and golf courses. A lengthy list of other businesses will be allowed to get underway the following Tuesday.

May 19, 2020: The **Ontario government says an in-class school year** will not be able to recommence during the coronavirus pandemic, however, online learning will continue.



Figure 8 Milligan's Meats, Cloyne April 1, 2020

May 23, 2020: Ontario **reports 412 new cases of novel coronavirus**, bringing the total number of cases in the province to 25,040.

May 23, 2020: **Thousands of people gather in Trinity Bellwoods Park** in Toronto drawing condemnation and scorn from elected officials and city staff.

May 26, 2020: **Canadian Armed Forces teams deployed to five of the province's** worst-hit long-term care homes to help control COVID-19 raise concerns about each facility, describing the care as ranging from below best practices to "borderline abusive, if not abusive" and worse, documents obtained by Global News show.

May 27, 2020: The **Ontario government says it is extending** all current emergency orders until June 9.

May 27, 2020: The Province **announces that chiropractors, dentists, massage therapists, optometrists, homeopaths, and psychologists** can see patients once each profession gets the go-ahead and receives guidelines from each respective governing authority.

June 1, 2020: New rules come into effect at **Pearson Airport in Mississauga** which include mandatory face masks and the barring of “meeters and greeters” from inside its terminals.

June 2, 2020: Ontario’s state of emergency extended by 28 days but Premier Doug Ford insists that does not mean the province’s reopening will necessarily be put “on hold” during that time.

June 4, 2020: The province allows short-term rentals to operate including lodges, cabins, cottages, homes, and condominiums.

June 6, 2020: The total number of cases in **Ontario passes 30,000** as the province announces 455 new cases including 68 from a reporting delay. A total of 2,407 Ontarians have now suffered COVID-19-related deaths.

June 6, 2020: The Ford government **extends emergency orders** by another 10 days.

June 8, 2020: Ontario announces that some regions of the province will enter **Stage 2 of its COVID-19 recovery** plan. Toronto, Mississauga, and Hamilton are among the areas which are excluded.

June 9, 2020: **Province announces daycares** can open the following Friday although few, if any, can given the short notice and lengthy set of adjustments needed.

June 11, 2020: **Province announces “cautious” restart plan** to allow visitors back into the province’s long-term care homes beginning June 18.

June 14, 2020: Ontario announces it has conducted it has now conducted more than a million tests for the novel coronavirus.

June 15, 2020: The Province announces that several regions including Durham, York, Hamilton, Sarnia-Lambton, and Niagara are allowed to enter into **Stage 2 of its recovery plan**. Toronto, Peel, and Windsor remain in Phase 1 however.

June 17, 2020: The **Ontario government extends all current emergency orders** until June 30 while stating it will review each order on a case-by-case basis to determine if it can be adjusted or lifted.

June 22, 2020: Toronto and Peel Region permitted to enter Stage 2 of the province's recovery plan. Windsor-Essex remains alone in Stage 1.

June 23, 2020: Ontario reports the first death of someone 19 years old or younger. The province does not indicate the exact age or gender of the deceased or where the person is from in Ontario.

June 24, 2020: The Ontario government extends emergency orders until July 15.

June 24, 2020: Most of **the region of Windsor-Essex** will be allowed to move into Stage 2. of Ontario's recovery plan. Leamington and Kingsville left in Stage 1.

June 30, 2020: Ontario reports 157 new cases of the novel, bringing the provincial total to 35,068. The death toll in the province reaches 2,672.

July 1, 2020: The Province **asks school boards** to consider starting the school year earlier than normal.

July 6, 2020: Ford announces Kingsville and Leamington, Ont., will move to Stage 2 the following day. The entire province is now in Stage 2.

July 9, 2020: The Ontario government extends emergency orders until July 22.

July 13, 2020: Ontario announces some of the province will enter Stage 3 of the second phase of its recovery plan on July 17. The Greater Toronto

Area, Hamilton, Niagara, Haldimand-Norfolk, Lambton, and Windsor-Essex are left in Stage 2.

July 16, 2020: The province has most emergency orders until July 29. The Ford government claims that doing so, will allow the government flexibility to ensure vulnerable populations are protected.

July 24, 2020: Hamilton, the regions of York, Durham, Halton, and Niagara as well as the counties of Haldimand, Norfolk, and Lambton are allowed to enter Stage 3 of the province's reopening plan.

July 29, 2020: The Ontario government says Toronto and Peel Region can finally move into Stage 3 of the province's reopening plan on July 31.

July 30, 2020: The Ontario government says that come September, elementary students will be in the classroom five days a week while most secondary students will be in at least 50 percent of the time.

Aug. 9, 2020: Ontario reports 79 new cases of the novel coronavirus, bringing the total number of cases in the province to 40,046.

Aug. 10, 2020: The province gives Windsor-Essex the green light to move into Stage 3 of the province's reopening plan on Aug. 12.

Aug. 14, 2020: The Ontario government announces it is increasing the number of people indoor sports, fitness, and recreation facilities can have, so long as distancing measures are adhered to.

Aug. 20, 2020: The Ford government announces it is extending the [emergency pandemic orders](#) until Sept. 22. The government says the extensions give it the ability to address ongoing risks and effects of the virus and to ensure measures remain in place to protect the population.

Aug. 26, 2020: Ontario government releases [21-page](#) on how to deal with outbreaks in schools as students and staff close on a return to school.

Sept. 8, 2020: Health Minister Christine Elliott announces a pause in loosening any more restrictions that have been put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Sept. 13, 2020: A coronavirus **outbreak was declared** after three Western University students tested positive on Saturday.

Sept. 15, 2020: Ontario reports 251 new cases of the novel **coronavirus**, bringing the provincial total to 45,068.

Sept. 17, 2020: Ford reduces the number of people allowed at private gathering limits to 10 indoors and 25 outdoors in Toronto, Peel Region, and Ottawa. Two days later, they would be expanded across the province.

Sept. 20, 2020: Christine Elliott **announces the province has** conducted more than 40,000 tests in 24 hours.

Sept. 23, 2020: The Ontario government announces pharmacies in select locations will begin offering COVID-19 tests to people who aren't experiencing symptoms of the virus as part of its fall preparedness plan.

Sept. 25, 2020: The province orders strip clubs to close while also ordering restaurants, bars, and other food and drink businesses to stop serving alcohol at 11 p.m. and close between midnight and 5 a.m.

Sept. 25, 2020: Pharmacies in the GTA, Huntsville, and Ottawa areas begin to offer coronavirus testing to at-risk, asymptomatic people by appointment only.

Sept. 26, 2020: **Huge crowds take over the Town of Wasaga Beach** for a car rally despite provincial gathering restrictions amid the coronavirus pandemic. Images posted to social media show huge crowds lining the streets and cars performing stunts.

Sept. 27, 2020: Western University in London, Ont., says **at least 28 of its students** have tested positive for the coronavirus.

Sept. 28, 2020: Ontario reported 700 new cases of the novel coronavirus on Monday, marking a new record for the most daily infections ever recorded in the province. It breaks the previous high which was established in April. This also pushes the total number of cases past the 50,000 mark.

Sept. 28, 2020: Ford says the province is now officially **in the second wave** of the coronavirus pandemic.

Sept. 28, 2020: Ontario Hospital Association **calls on the province** to return to Phase 2 of its pandemic recovery plan. The OHA says a return to Stage 2 with restrictions on indoor dining, bars, places of worship, weddings, gyms, movie theatres, and other non-essential businesses is needed to prevent more cases and to allow schools to remain open.

Sept. 29, 2020: Canada **signs deal** to buy up to 7.9 million rapid coronavirus rapid point care tests, pending approval from health officials.

Sept. 30, 2020: Durham Public Health reports that at least eight people associated with a wedding in Oshawa have COVID-19.

Sept. 30, 2020: Ontario health officials say the province could see upwards of 1,000 coronavirus cases a day in October, as the second wave is in full swing.

Oct. 1, 2020: Province announces **new screening guidelines** for daycares and schools which include students only being required to stay home for 24 hours for symptoms such as runny noses.

Oct. 2, 2020: Ontario announces **province-wide mask policy** as well as restrictions on number of patrons in bars, restaurants, nightclubs, Banquet halls, event spaces, and gyms.

Oct. 3, 2020: New restrictions placed on restaurants, bars, banquet halls, and gyms in Ottawa, Toronto and Peel Region.

Oct. 5, 2020: Ford **rejects calls for indoor dining to be ordered closed** at restaurants in some areas of the province amid rising coronavirus cases, saying there isn't enough evidence to make such a decision.

Oct. 6, 2020: Christopher Saccoccia, also known as Chris Sky, and 34-year-old Jennifer Saccoccia are **both charged with failure to comply** with an order prohibiting or subjecting to any condition the entry into Canada.

Oct. 6, 2020: Ontario reports 548 new cases of the novel coronavirus, bringing the provincial total to 55,362.

Oct. 8, 2020: The province reports 797 new cases of the novel coronavirus. The province processed nearly 48,500 tests, which is also a new provincial record.

Oct. 9, 2020: Ontario is reporting 939 new cases of **coronavirus**. For the second day in a row, the province reports a record number of news cases.

Oct. 9, 2020: New **restrictions are put in place** for Toronto, Peel Region, and Ottawa amid rising coronavirus cases including the closure of indoor dining at restaurants and bars, as well as the closure of gyms, casinos, cinemas, and performing arts centres.

Oct. 10, 2020: Seven new COVID-19-related deaths are announced, bringing the provincial death toll to 3,004.

Oct. 11, 2020: **Hamilton** public health officials link 47 cases to an **outbreak at a spin studio in the city**. Thirty-eight are considered primary (36 members and 2 employees) and nine secondary.

Oct. 13, 2020: Ontario reports 746 new positive tests for the coronavirus. The total cumulative number of cases reaches 60,692.

Oct. 19, 2020: The province reports 704 new cases of **coronavirus**, bringing the provincial total to 65,075.

Oct. 21, 2020: Independent MPP **Randy Hillier** hosts a **gathering of over 25 people** in which most were not wearing masks. No fines are laid.

Oct. 23, 2020: Ontario's independent commission into **long-term care** releases early recommendations for the Ford government to implement during the second wave of the pandemic. In addition, it says that during the first wave, 55 percent of long-term care homes in the province reported an outbreak, while 75 percent of all deaths were represented by long-term care residents.

Oct. 25, 2020: A 21-year-old man dies after being **shot in a parking lot outside an east-end LCBO** following an argument inside the store. The LCBO employee's union confirms the dispute was over social distancing.

Oct. 25, 2020: Ontario reports over 1,000 new cases of COVID-19 for the first time. The province announces 1,042 new cases, bringing the total number of cases in the province to 70,373.

Oct. 28, 2020: **GoodLife Fitness** sends an email to 175,000 people urging them to lobby Ontario MPPs as the province begins to close them in the wake of a rising tide of new COVID-19 cases.

Oct. 30, 2020: Premier Doug Ford's **constituency office in Etobicoke** confirms a **COVID-19** outbreak.

Oct. 31, 2020: Ontario reports 1,015 new cases of the novel coronavirus, bringing the total number of cases across the province to 75,730.

Nov. 3, 2020: The province **introduces a new five-tiered, colour-coded system** for determining how it will regulate areas when during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following levels were used: Prevent (standard measures – green), protect (strengthened measures – yellow), restrict (intermediate measures – orange), control (stringent measures – red), and lockdown (maximum measures – grey).

Nov. 5, 2020: Ontario reports 998 new cases of **coronavirus**, bringing the provincial total to 80,690.

Nov. 6, 2020: The province releases an updated list of which areas are placed in which zones in its new coronavirus system. Peel is alone in the red zone while Ottawa and York Region were placed in the orange zone and several others including Waterloo and Guelph were moved to yellow.

Nov. 9, 2020: The province announces 1,242 new cases of **coronavirus**, bringing the provincial total to 85,395.

Nov. 10, 2020: It is announced that Toronto will **enter the red zone** under Ontario's recently introduced coronavirus system in the days that follow.

Nov. 12, 2020: The province reports 1,575 new cases of coronavirus, a new record and also the first time Ontario has reported more than 1,500 cases in one day.

Nov. 16, 2020: Ontario announces **1,487 new cases of coronavirus**, bringing the provincial total to 95,496. This is the 11th straight day the province has announced more than 1,000 new cases.

Nov. 18, 2020: A day after the provincial government says it is considering a prolonged winter break, it nixes the idea with Lecce saying it is “not necessary” because current protocols are working.

Nov. 18, 2020: It is announced that **a child and youth worker at a Toronto school** has died after contracting COVID-19. The woman worked at St. Francis De Sales Catholic School.

Nov. 20, 2020: The Ford government **announces it will extend current orders** under the Reopening Ontario Act until Dec. 21 due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Nov. 20, 2020: Ontario reports 1,418 new cases of coronavirus, as the province surpasses 100,000 cumulative cases, bringing the provincial total to 100,790.

Nov. 25, 2020: Adam Skelly, who owns Adamson Barbecue, is arrested **after opening his restaurant** for indoor dining, ignoring COVID-19 restrictions put in place by the province.

Dec. 5, 2020: Ontario reports **1,859 new cases of the novel coronavirus**, bringing the total number of cases in the province to 125,385.

Dec. 6, 2020: The province announces **1,924 new cases of the coronavirus**, bringing the total number of cases in the province to 127,309. This is a record number of new cases and the first time the province has announced more than 1,900 new cases in one day.

Dec. 7, 2020: Ford lays out his government's **three-part vaccination rollout plan**. Vulnerable seniors, their caregivers, and health-care workers are among those who will get it first

Dec. 8, 2020: Ontario's fiscal watchdog says the province had \$12 billion in unspent reserve funds by the end of September.

Dec. 8, 2020: Elliott says **residents who get a COVID-19 vaccine** will be issued proof they received a shot which may be necessary to avoid some restrictions.

Dec. 9, 2020: Pfizer's coronavirus vaccine is **officially approved for use in Canada**, with limited rollout set to begin to priority groups "within days."

Dec. 11, 2020: York Region and Windsor-Essex **will move into lockdown** under Ontario's COVID-19 colour-coded system, joining Toronto and Peel Region.

Dec. 11, 2020: A **Peterborough man who spent more than eight months** at Peterborough Regional Health Centre fighting **COVID-19** is discharged from hospital.

Dec. 14, 2020: The **Ford government announces** that COVID-19 tests will no longer be free for people requiring proof of a negative test for international travel destinations.

Dec. 14, 2020: Anita Quidangen, a personal support worker, is the **first to receive Pfizer's vaccine in Toronto**, with four other long-term care workers vaccinated soon after.

Dec. 15, 2020: Ontario **reported 2,275 new cases of coronavirus**, marking a new single-day record. Elliott says the increase in cases is in part due to a lengthened period of data collection.

Dec. 16, 2020: Another 43 deaths are reported by the province, raising Ontario's death toll to 4,035.

Dec. 17, 2020: The Ontario Hospital Association says it is **urging the government to implement a four-week lockdown** in every public health unit with an infection rate of 40/100,000 population or higher.

Dec. 18, 2020: Ford calls an **emergency meeting with health officials from across the province** to discuss ways to tackle rising hospitalizations from **COVID-19** as infections surge.

Dec. 18, 2020: The province reports 2,290 new cases of coronavirus, **bringing the provincial total number of COVID-19 cases to 151,257**.

Dec. 21, 2020: Doug Ford announces a “provincewide shutdown” **which will begin on Boxing Day** and last for four weeks in southern areas of the province and two weeks in northern areas.

Dec. 26, 2020: Ontario confirms Canada’s first known cases of the **U.K. coronavirus variant** involving a couple from the Durham Region who were in contact with a recent traveler from the U.K.

Dec. 26, 2020: A province-wide lockdown gets underway **with a higher level of restrictions** being placed on the southern portion of the province for four weeks while the less populous northern portion of Ontario is shutdown for just two weeks.

Dec. 28, 2020: The Province announces that a total **of 13,200 vaccines have been administered in Ontario**. The government says that it cut back on administering doses over holidays to prevent staffing shortages in hospitals and long-term-care homes.

Dec. 29, 2020: With the public in an Ontario-wide lockdown, it learns that Finance Minister Rod Phillips is vacationing in St. Barts. Ford would say he became aware of the Ajax MP’s trip about two weeks earlier but did not push for Phillips to come home.

Dec. 29, 2020: The Ontario government **says it expects to vaccinate approximately 8.5 million people** by the end of June against **COVID-19**.

Dec. 29, 2020: The province reports 2,553 **new positive tests for COVID-19**, raising the total number of cases in Ontario to 175,908.

Dec. 31, 2020: Phillips **resigns from his posting** after returning from his vacation to the Caribbean amid a pandemic. He remains a backbencher.

Dec. 31, 2020: Up to 300 residents of Castleview Wychwood Towers in Toronto become the first to receive the Moderna vaccine.

Jan. 2, 2021: Ontario reports 3,363 new COVID-19 cases, the most in one day since the pandemic began.

Jan. 4, 2021: Anita Quidangen, a healthcare worker in Toronto, becomes the first person in Ontario to receive a second dose of the Pfizer vaccine.

Jan. 5, 2021: The Ontario government **says it is prioritizing long-term care homes** in hotspot regions such as Toronto, Peel, York, and Windsor-Essex for COVID-19 vaccinations as it hopes to vaccinate the workers by Jan. 21.

Jan. 5, 2021: **News emerges that Dr. Tom Stewart**, CEO of St. Joseph's Health System and a member of the province's COVID-19 advisory table traveled to the Caribbean over the holidays.

Jan. 6, 2021: Ontario government **launches a pilot program** that will test international travelers returning to the province for COVID-19.

Jan. 6, 2021: The province announces 3,266 new positive tests for the **coronavirus**, bringing the provincial total to 200,626.

Jan. 7, 2021: Three days after a letter from Lecce is emailed to parents stating that kids will return to elementary school. Four days later, **about-face** and extends online learning until Jan. 25.

Jan. 7, 2021: The **province announces it** will allow the Toronto Maple Leafs and Ottawa Senators to play home games.

Jan. 8, 2021: Tendercare Living Centre in Toronto reports two more deaths bringing the number of COVID-19-related deaths in the long-term care home

to 73. In doing so, it now has the dubious distinction of being the deadliest COVID-19 outbreak the province has seen since the pandemic began.

Jan. 8, 2021: Toronto hospitals transfer **young patients to SickKids hospital** to make room for adult COVID-19 patients.

Jan. 9, 2021: Lecce announces an expanded list of essential workers eligible for free child care while also announcing that students with special needs who cannot learn remotely will be back in the classroom.

Jan. 11, 2021: The death toll in the **province reaches 5,012 after 29 more deaths** are reported.

Jan. 12, 2021: Ford announces schools in the province's **COVID-19** hotspot regions (Windsor-Essex, Peel, Toronto, York, and Hamilton) will remain closed to in-class instruction until at least Feb. 10. The rest of the province sees closures extended for two weeks while they will wait until Jan. 20 to find out future plans.

Jan. 14, 2021: The province issues an **emergency alert reminding Ontarians** there is a stay-at-home order in effect amid surging coronavirus cases.

Jan. 15, 2021: Toronto York-Centre MPP Roman Baber is **kicked out of PC Caucus** after penning a letter to Ford that says the lockdown should end immediately while saying, "The virus is real but the crisis is mostly in LTC."

Jan. 15, 2021: The Federal government **announces that Pfizer will** cut its vaccine shipments to Canada in half for four weeks as it works to retool its plant.

Jan. 16, 2021: The Ontario government extends the window for the second dose of COVID-19 vaccinations to account for Pfizer-BioNtech shipment and delivery delays.

Jan. 19, 2021: Doug Ford issues **plea to U.S. President-elect Joe Biden** for help in obtaining more Pfizer **COVID-19** vaccines amid a shortage of doses in Canada.

Jan. 20, 2021: [Canada Post says 121 employees](#) have tested positive for the coronavirus at their “large” Dixie Road facility since Jan. 1.

Jan. 23, 2021: Middlesex-London Health Unit reports that a teen has suffered a COVID-19-related death. It would later be learned that 19-year-old Yassin Dabeh worked for a cleaning service that was brought into a long-term care home in Delaware, Ont.

Jan. 24, 2021: Waterloo Regional Police say a [Woolwich church allegedly held an in-person service](#) despite a court order compelling it to comply with provincial COVID-19 pandemic rules.

Jan. 25, 2021: Ontario government updates their COVID-19 vaccination plan for the province as the delays with Pfizer continue, with no allocations of the vaccine being provided the week of Jan. 25. The target date of Feb. 5 to provide first doses to long-term care, high-risk retirement, and First Nations elder care home residents remains the goal.

Jan. 28, 2021: The COVID-19-related death toll across the province surpasses the 6,000 mark after 56 more deaths were reported.

Jan. 30, 2021: Ontario’s [regional public health officials ask the province](#) to prioritize opening schools before lifting other public health restrictions.

Jan. 25, 2021: On the first anniversary of the first case in Ontario, the province reports 1,958 new cases of the coronavirus on Monday, bringing the provincial total to 256,960.

Feb. 1, 2021: Ford government announces province’s [first known case of the South African coronavirus variant in Mississauga](#) and officials say there is no known link to travel.

Feb. 3, 2021: Lecce announced [that a large portion of students](#) in southern Ontario who remain out of school will be allowed to return the following Monday. Students in Toronto, York, and Peel regions will remain in the online learning stream.

Feb. 5, 2021: Ontario reports 1,670 **new cases of the coronavirus**, bringing the provincial total to 275,330.

Feb. 7, 2021: Toronto Public Health officials say a case of the Brazilian COVID-19 variant, which is believed to be more transmissible than other strains, has been reported in the city. It marks the first known case of the strain in Ontario.

Feb. 8, 2021: A long-term-care home in **Vaughn, Ont. comes under fire** after it is revealed that vaccines were given to non-staff or residents. It is also alleged that a doctor took doses for personal use.

Feb. 9, 2021: Global News confirms that the province has **developed an online portal** for “for eventual mass vaccination appointments.”

Feb. 14, 2021: Ontario **updates its list of priority groups for COVID-19 vaccines** to include people over the age of 79, all indigenous adults, and adults receiving in-home care for chronic illnesses to name a few.

Feb. 16, 2021: **Twenty-seven regions move back** to the colour-coded pandemic restrictions system used before a provincewide lockdown that began on Boxing Day. Toronto, York, Peel, and North Bay-Parry Sound remain in lockdown.

Feb. 17, 2021: The **medical officers of health for Toronto and Peel Region** send a letter to the province requesting that their respective municipalities remain in shutdown until at least March 9.

Feb. 19, 2021: York Region is **allowed to move into the red zone** of the province’s colour-coded pandemic response system on Feb. 22. Toronto, Peel Region, and North Bay-Parry Sound will remain in lockdown for another two weeks.

Feb. 24, 2021: Retired Gen. Rick Hillier, the head of the province’s vaccine rollout, **announces that an online booking system and service desk will** not be available until March 15. He also says those over the age of 79 will start vaccinations at that point.

Feb. 25, 2021: The coronavirus [pandemic will “likely \[recede\] in the summer”](#) but variant spread, maintaining public health measures and focused vaccinations will be critical, the province’s science table announces.

Feb. 25, 2021: A public [commission is told the province had no updated plan](#) for dealing with a pandemic when COVID-19 began cutting a deadly swath through Ontario last spring. The province’s chief medical officer of health, Dr. David Williams, denies responsibility for the shortcoming.

Feb. 26, 2021: Canada approves the [Oxford–AstraZeneca’s coronavirus vaccine](#), making it the third shot officially authorized in the country.

Feb. 26, 2021: Thunder Bay and Simcoe-Muskoka are moved into the lockdown level by the province while Niagara goes red in a bid to slow the spread of COVID-19. At the other end of the spectrum, London and many of the surrounding public health areas move to the orange restrict or yellow protect levels.

Feb. 28, 2021: The province announces 1,062 cases of the novel coronavirus, bringing the total number of cases in the province to 300,816.

Mar. 2, 2021: Elliott says Ontario [will follow the advice of a national panel](#) that recommended against using the newly approved Oxford-AstraZeneca on people aged 65 and older.

Mar. 3, 2021: Ontario [reports 17 more COVID-19-related deaths](#), pushing the provincial total past the 7,000 milestone to 7,014.

Mar. 5, 2021: The [Ontario government says](#) it is aiming to have all eligible residents who wish to get a vaccine have their first dose completed by June 20, the first day of summer.

Mar. 7, 2021: The [Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto launches an initiative](#) calling on the Ontario government to amend capacity restrictions for places of worship.

Mar. 10, 2021: The **province announces that 325 pharmacies** in Toronto, Windsor-Essex, and Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox, and Addington will begin providing COVID-19 vaccinations using the newly-approved Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine.

Mar. 11, 2021: Elliott says there have now been more than a million COVID-19 vaccines administered in the province, with the total standing at 1,019,407 shots.



Figure 9 Tobia's Pharmacy – Northbrook, prescription window pick-up March 19, 2021

Mar. 11, 2021: Ford **comes under fire** for remarks he made in Queen's Park suggesting an Indigenous MPP jumped the line to get his COVID-19 vaccine.

Mar. 12, 2021: An **Amazon facility in Brampton closes** after it is connected to more than 600 COVID-19 cases in an outbreak that first began in October 2020.

Mar. 13, 2021: Family doctors in Toronto, Peel Region, Hamilton, Guelph, Peterborough, and Simcoe-Muskoka begin administering the Oxford-AstraZeneca shot.

Mar. 15, 2021: Nearly 100,000 **Ontarians aged 80 and older book COVID-19 vaccine appointments** as the province launches its online portal with some glitches. Areas with their own portals continue to operate independently.

Mar. 16, 2021: Upper Canada College, one of **the country's most elite private schools**, closes after 12 people connected with the school test positive for COVID-19.

Mar. 22, 2021: The province announces that Ontarians over the age of 75 can start booking appointments in areas that have not already allowed them to do so.

Mar. 23, 2021: Peel Regional Police say an Edmonton man was **charged after allegedly presenting a fake negative COVID-19** test at Toronto Pearson International Airport.

Mar. 24, 2021: The Ontario government **lays out a \$186-billion spending plan** which it says will fight **COVID-19**, help small businesses, and support families. It will come with a \$33.1-billion deficit which will not be paid off for at least eight years.

Mar. 26, 2021: The **Ontario Public School Board Association issues** a letter to Stephen Lecce stating that teachers should be vaccinated as early as possible to keep kids in classrooms.

Mar. 27, 2021: The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario **issues a statement** saying recent government decisions to loosen dining restrictions as well as allow personal care services to open threaten the province's health-care system and in-person learning.

Mar. 28, 2021: **Lecce issues a letter** to the federal government, calling on them to prepare for the availability of COVID-19 vaccines for children and youth.

Mar. 29, 2021: Elliott **receives a shot of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19** vaccine on camera Monday morning to assuage concerns about the vaccine.

Apr. 1, 2021: [Lecce says schools will remain open](#) as they are “critical for mental health and learning.” He also previously said the April Break will go ahead as planned. “Students deserve to be in class,” Lecce tweeted.

Apr. 1, 2021: Ontario [reports 2,557 new COVID-19 cases](#), bringing the provincial total to 352,460.

Apr. 1, 2021: [Ontario government](#) moves to activate an “emergency brake” for four weeks across the entire province.

Apr. 5, 2021: The [medical officers for three of Ontario’s major COVID-19 hotspots](#), Toronto Peel, and Ottawa- ask Ontario’s chief medical officer to close the province down.

Apr. 5/6, 2021: [Peel, Toronto, and Guelph’s medical officers of health](#) order schools to be closed.

Apr. 7, 2021: The Ford government declares the province’s third state of emergency amid the [COVID-19](#) pandemic and is issuing a provincewide stay-at-home order. The order will last for four weeks.

Apr. 9, 2021: Ontario Premier Doug Ford [receives his first dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine](#) on camera Friday.

Apr. 11, 2021: Ontario [reports 4,456 coronavirus cases](#), setting the record for the number of new cases in 24 hours.

Apr. 11, 2021: The province [announces that another 700 pharmacies](#) are joining the COVID-19 vaccine rollout as the province races to slow to spread of the virus.

Apr. 12, 2021: Lecce [announces that Ontario students will be staying in remote learning](#) indefinitely following the April Break once again. The announcement comes a day after he stated the opposite.

Apr. 13, 2021: Ontario says it [will add hundreds of critical care beds](#) this week to help with an influx of [COVID-19](#) cases that is pushing the health-care system to the brink.

Apr. 14, 2021: Government officials [continue to insist the province's COVID-19 vaccine rollout](#) is being impacted by shipment delays amid news of clinics being shut down due to lack of supply.

Apr. 15, 2021: [Ontario reports 4,736 new COVID-19 cases](#), a single-day high since the pandemic began. The provincial total now stands at 403,571, surpassing the 400,000 mark.

Apr. 19, 2021: A hospital system servicing the York Region [says six people were mistakenly injected with saline](#) instead of a [COVID-19](#) vaccine.

Apr. 20, 2021: Ontario Hockey League officially [cancels the 2020-21 season](#), quashing any hopes it could at least salvage a shortened season.

Apr. 21, 2021: Ford's office [announces he is self-isolating](#) after being in close contact with a staff member in his office who tested positive for [COVID-19](#).

Apr. 22, 2021: A [Toronto police](#) spokesperson tells Global News the service is reviewing a video posted on Facebook that appears to show two of its officers engaged in a verbal dispute with police in Aylmer, Ont., after officers in the town charged them and two others for violating [COVID-19](#) orders at a church.

Apr. 23, 2021: Ontario's [COVID-19 Science Advisory Table recommends](#) redirecting more vaccines to hot spots in the province which it says will help reduce case counts, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Apr. 26, 2021: A 13-year-old Brampton [girl dies after testing positive for COVID-19](#), becoming one of the youngest victims of the virus in Ontario.

Apr. 28, 2021: The Ford government announces that workers who have been impacted by [COVID-19](#) will be able to access three paid sick days. Critics question the gap between the number of paid sick days and the number of days (14) people need to self-isolate if exposed to COVID-19.

Apr. 29, 2021: The COVID-19-related death toll surpasses 8,000 (8,029) as 41 more deaths were recorded.

Apr. 30, 2021: Lecce **states that education workers across the province** will be eligible as early as the week of May 3.

May 2, 2021: The province **announces all adults 18 and older living in any of 114 designated hot spot postal codes** will be able to book their shots on May 3.

May 4, 2021: Ontario government **issues a new directive** for the province's long-term care homes that will see COVID-19 restrictions eased after a high uptake of vaccinations.

May 4, 2021: The Bridges at Tillsonburg Golf Club, which **remained open in defiance of the province's stay-at-home order**, announces a temporary closure after more than two dozen charges were laid against patrons and the golf course itself.

May 5, 2021: Police **say they have charged a man** at Toronto Pearson International Airport after he allegedly used a fraudulent COVID-19 document.

May 6, 2021: Ornge Air Ambulance, the organization in charge of patient transfers, **says it transferred** 1,125 COVID-19 patients in ICUs across Ontario in April and another 183 patients from May 1 to May 5.

May 6, 2021: A COVID-19 outbreak at **a Kingston construction site spreads to a total of 61 people**. The local health unit says 39 workers caught the virus directly from the site outbreak as 22 of their close contacts also tested positive.

May 7, 2021: **Trudeau pushes back against Ontario's ongoing calls** for tighter travel restrictions, saying finger-pointing won't help Ontarians as the province grapples with the third wave of COVID-19.

May 8, 2021: Ontario government **expands access to Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccines** for those 18 and older at select pharmacies in hot spot communities.

May 10, 2021: The Ontario government announces **COVID-19** vaccine eligibility will soon be expanded to people with at-risk health conditions, people who cannot work from home (Group 2) and people aged 40 and older in non-hot spot communities. The province also announced certain high-risk healthcare workers will be allowed to get a second dose earlier than the expected fourth-month interval.