



Statement from Dr. Nicola Mercer on the first local case of Brazilian variant

April 16, 2021

My fellow residents of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph,

Today, WDG Public Health is announcing the first identified local case of the Brazilian (P1) variant. This is a critical moment for our region. Variants of concern are causing a dramatic shift in our numbers and now make up 70 percent of all local cases. Case rates have quadrupled over the past two weeks – driven mainly by cases in people under 40.

There can be no doubt – this is a dangerous time. If you have been relaxed about public health measures up until now please change, for the sake of your family and loved ones. This is my ask for the next month:

- **Only leave your home for work, exercise or the most essential reasons;**
- **Always wear a mask around others;**
- **Maintain a six-foot distance whenever you go outside your home;**
- **Pre-register for the vaccine so you can be notified when it is your turn to be vaccinated;**
and
- **Above all, do not get together indoors with friends or family.**

I know this pandemic has already forced you to sacrifice so much. I know each of you is exhausted by what you've been through and fearful of what still lies ahead. But, I am afraid we must follow this strict behaviour for one more month.

This wave of the pandemic is like nothing we have experienced during the past year. Make no mistake: COVID-19 variants of concern move more easily between people and increase the risk of debilitating illness or death – especially among those from age 20-40. Projections show us how bad the situation could get if we don't change our behaviours. Projections also show hope on the horizon as vaccines continue to arrive. Other countries have proven that if we can get 75 percent of the population vaccinated, we can get our lives back. We all want this to be over soon. We all want the people we love the most to be here when it does end.



If you haven't already, please pre-register for your COVID-19 vaccine. If you have pre-registered, please make sure those in your life are vaccinated as well. Visit our website to preregister:

wdgpublichealth.ca/register

Please stay safe and stay well,

Dr. Nicola Mercer, MD, MBA, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health and CEO