

Legislative  
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of Ontario



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de l'Ontario

# SELECT COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT

## FOURTEENTH INTERIM REPORT

2<sup>nd</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament  
70 Elizabeth II

ISBN 978-1-4868-5514-8 (Print)  
ISBN 978-1-4868-5510-0 [English] (PDF)  
ISBN 978-1-4868-5512-4 [French] (PDF)  
ISBN 978-1-4868-5511-7 [English] (HTML)  
ISBN 978-1-4868-5513-1 [French] (HTML)

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The Honourable Ted Arnott, MPP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Sir,

Your Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight has the honour to present its Report and commends it to the House.

Daryl Kramp, MPP  
Chair of the Committee

Queen's Park  
October 2021



# SELECT COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT MEMBERSHIP LIST

1<sup>st</sup> Session, 42<sup>nd</sup> Parliament

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FRANCE GÉLINAS, MICHAEL PARSA, AMARJOT SANDHU, and MARIT STILES  
regularly served as substitute members of the Committee.

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CHRISTOPHER TYRELL  
Clerk of the Committee

ANDREW MCNAUGHT  
Research Officer



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## **INTRODUCTION**

On July 22, 2021, the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight met for the fourteenth time to receive an update on emergency orders relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Issued under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* in the early months of the pandemic, these orders have been continued (and amended) as regulations under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* (“the *Reopening Ontario Act*”).

As provided for in the Committee’s mandate, the Solicitor General for Ontario appeared as the Premier’s designate to provide an oral report and respond to Committee questions.

This report summarizes the Solicitor General’s presentation and follow-up discussion with Committee members. To view the Solicitor General’s full remarks and all questions posed by Committee members, the reader is referred to the *Hansard* transcript of the meeting.

This is the Select Committee’s fourteenth interim report. It is a snapshot of the situation in the province as of July 22, 2021. As of that date, all 34 public health units had entered Step 3 of the province’s reopening framework, known as the Roadmap to Reopen. The Roadmap is set out in the *Reopening Ontario Act* and regulations.

Further interim reports and a final report will follow.

## **COMMITTEE MANDATE**

On July 13, 2020, the government House leader introduced a motion to appoint a Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight. Following debate, the motion carried on July 15, 2020. The Committee was appointed to receive oral reports from the Premier or his designate(s) on any extensions of emergency orders by the Lieutenant Governor in Council related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rationale for those extensions.

Under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, the Premier, or a Minister to whom the Premier delegates the responsibility, is required to appear before and report to a standing or select committee designated by the Assembly, at least once every 30 days. This report is to address

- (a) orders that were extended during the reporting period; and
- (b) the rationale for those extensions.

Hearings consist of a report from the Premier or his designate(s), followed by questions from the Committee. The Committee is authorized to release interim reports summarizing each hearing.

The Committee’s mandate is reproduced in full in Appendix A to this report.

## REPORT FROM THE SOLICITOR GENERAL

### Opening Remarks

Ontario's Solicitor General, the Honourable Sylvia Jones, appeared before the Committee on July 22, 2021.

In her opening remarks, the Solicitor General observed that "Ontario is seeing the results of a two-dose summer." Highlights include the fact that all of the province's public health units had entered Step 3 of the Roadmap to Reopen as of July 16, and that with over 60% of Ontarians over the age of 12 having received a second dose of vaccine, the province's vaccination rollout was "proceeding ahead of schedule."

With these milestones met, efforts are now focused on the approximately 20% of eligible Ontarians who have yet to receive even one dose. The Solicitor General noted in particular that the province is expanding the number of family doctors who can administer vaccines, and is supplying more vaccines to local pharmacies. In addition, municipal initiatives that target people, "where they live," will also make it easier to get a vaccination.

The Solicitor General also responded specifically to a question that had been posed by a Committee Member during the Committee's last meeting on June 24. The Member had asked who funds Ontario's paid COVID-19 sick days, and which ministry decides whether an employer's claim is accepted.

As explained by the Solicitor General, employer reimbursement claims for employee paid sick days are made to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB). The Board—not a government ministry—is responsible for determining whether an employer should be reimbursed. Funding for the reimbursement program is provided by the government, through the Ministry of Labour—it is not a WSIB program and is not paid for out of the insurance fund.

### Amended Orders

The Solicitor General continued with a review of orders under the *Reopening Ontario Act* that had been amended since the Committee's last meeting.

Most notably, amendments to O. Reg. 363/20 (Steps of Reopening) moved all of the province's public health units into Step 3 of the Roadmap to Reopen. Corresponding amendments to O. Reg. 364/20 (Rules for Areas at Step 3) set out the health and workplace safety measures applicable to areas in Step 3.

These measures, the Solicitor General noted, focus on the resumption of additional outdoor and indoor services, with larger numbers of people and fewer restrictions. Step 3's main capacity rules are summarized below:

- **Businesses or facilities open to the public** must limit numbers so that members of the public are able to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from every other person. This means that the capacity of retail

is limited to the number of people who can maintain a physical distance of two metres.

- **Meeting or event spaces, conference centres, and convention centres** may rent out indoor or outdoor meeting or event spaces with the following conditions:
  - The total number of members of the public permitted to be in an indoor portion of the space must be limited to the number who can maintain physical distancing of at least two metres, and may not exceed 50% capacity or a total of 1,000 individuals, whichever is less.
  - An outdoor portion of the space may not exceed 75% capacity or 5,000 individuals, whichever is less.
  - The establishment must post a sign in a conspicuous location visible to the public that clearly states capacity limits, and must record the name and contact information of every individual who attends the event and maintain a record for at least one month.
- **Restaurants, bars, and other food and drink establishments** must limit the total number of patrons, whether indoors or outdoors, to the number who can maintain a physical distance from every other person in the establishment. There is no limit to the number of patrons a table can seat. Each table must be separated by a distance of at least two metres or by Plexiglas or some other impenetrable barrier. No person is permitted to dance at establishments without dance facilities.
- **Personal care services** such as barbershops and hair salons, including services requiring the removal of a face covering, are limited to the number of people who can maintain a physical distance of two metres.
- **Indoor sports arenas and gyms** are subject to a maximum 50% capacity of the indoor space. Capacity for indoor spectators is 50% of the usual seating capacity or 1,000 people, whichever is less. Capacity for outdoor spectators is 75% of seating capacity or 15,000 people, whichever is less.
- **Museums, galleries, historic sites, aquariums, zoos, landmarks, botanical gardens, science centres, casinos and bingo halls, amusement parks, fairs, rural exhibitions, and festivals** may not exceed 50% capacity indoors or 75% capacity outdoors.
- **Concert venues, cinemas, and live theatre** must operate at up to 50% capacity indoors or a maximum limit of 1,000 people for seated events, whichever is less; up to 75% capacity outdoors or a maximum limit of 5,000 people for unseated events; and up to 75% capacity outdoors or a maximum of 15,000 people for events with fixed seating, whichever is less.
- **Real estate open houses** are permitted with capacity limited to the number of people who can maintain a physical distance of two metres.

## Extended Orders

Orders under the *Reopening Ontario Act* that had been extended to August 18, 2021 (orders that would otherwise have expired on July 19) are listed below in numerical order, along with the Solicitor General's statement of the rationale for extension.

- *O. Reg. 74/20 (Work Redeployment for Certain Health Services Providers)* — This order authorizes specified health service providers within the meaning of the *Connecting Care Act, 2019*, to take reasonably necessary measures with respect to work deployment and staffing in order to respond to, prevent, and alleviate the outbreak of COVID-19, including redeploying staff to other health care providers and to assist long-term care homes and retirement homes.
- *O. Reg. 76/20 (Electronic Service)* — This order allows document service in legal matters against the Crown to be done electronically instead of in person. The order is needed to continue access to justice while reducing unnecessary contact between individuals to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- *O. Reg. 77/20 (Work Deployment Measures in Long-Term Care Homes)* — This order allows for work deployment measures in long-term care homes to be developed and modified based on staffing priorities and abilities, and allows homes to implement redeployment plans as required. Long-term-care homes have been affected by the pandemic and continue to rely on this regulation to help support staffing stability, which is crucial to prevent and manage outbreaks.
- *O. Reg. 95/20 (Streamlining Requirements for Long-Term Care Homes)* — This order provides long-term care homes with increased flexibility through a temporary suspension of several requirements, enabling homes to better focus resources on providing high-quality resident care and the safety needs of residents.
- *O. Reg. 98/20 (Prohibition on Certain Persons Charging Unconscionable Prices for Sales of Necessary Goods)* — This order enables consumers to continue to file complaints with the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services about price gouging with respect to the necessary goods set out in the order, some of which remain in short supply.
- *O. Reg. 114/20 (Enforcement of Orders)* — This order requires a person to identify themselves by providing their name, date of birth, and address to a police officer or other provincial offences officers if the officer has reasonable and probable grounds to believe the individual has committed an offence under subsection 10(1) of the *Reopening Ontario Act*. Without disclosure of this identifying information, officers would be unable to effectively issue tickets under the Act.
- *O. Reg. 116/20 (Work Deployment Measures for Boards of Health)* — This order allows boards of health within the meaning of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* to take any reasonably necessary measure with respect

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to work deployment and staffing in order to respond to, prevent, and alleviate the COVID-19 pandemic, including redeploying staff within different locations or in between facilities of the board of health.

- *O. Reg. 118/20 (Work Deployment Measures in Retirement Homes)* — This order allows flexibility for retirement home operators to recruit and reassign staff. It remains critical for helping to prevent and manage outbreaks to keep residents safe. Additionally, it ensures residents continue to receive stable services and care.
- *O. Reg. 121/20 (Service Agencies Providing Services and Supports to Adults with Developmental Disabilities and Service Providers Providing Intervenor Services)* — This order allows developmental service agencies and intervenor service providers to continue with the authority and flexibility they need to redeploy staff to support critical services for vulnerable individuals. Measures to alleviate staffing pressures continue to be needed as developmental service agencies respond to challenges posed by COVID-19.
- *O. Reg. 132/20 (Use of Force and Firearms in Policing Services)* — This order allows chiefs of police to authorize members of a police service to perform duties involving use of force and to carry a firearm if the member has successfully completed the required training within the previous 24 months of this authorization, instead of the annual training required under the *Police Services Act*.
- *O. Reg. 141/20 (Temporary Health or Residential Facilities)* — This order exempts the construction or conversion of a building from certain requirements of the *Building Code Act, 1992*, the *Planning Act*, and the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, where the building will be used as a temporary health or residential facility for the purpose of responding to the emergency or for health care or sleeping accommodation by or on behalf of health service providers, governments, and municipalities. There is a continued need for this provision to be in place to enable the province to respond to COVID-19 care, surgical backlog, and residential space needs.
- *O. Reg. 145/20 (Work Deployment Measures for Service Agencies Providing Violence Against Women Residential Services and Crisis Line Services)* — This order enables residential violence against women and anti-human trafficking service providers, as well as crisis lines under the violence against women support services program, to continue to have the authority and flexibility they need to redeploy staff to support critical services for survivors of violence against women and victims of human trafficking.
- *O. Reg. 146/20 (Limiting Work to a Single Long-Term Care Home)* — This order addresses ongoing staffing challenges in the long-term care sector and allows employees who have been fully immunized against COVID-19 to work in another long-term care home, retirement home, or other health service provider location.

- *O. Reg. 154/20 (Work Deployment Measures for District Social Services Administration Boards)* — This order provides district social services administration boards flexibility to address staffing shortages and ensure personnel are being deployed to critical areas of need to respond to COVID-19.
- *O. Reg. 156/20 (Deployment of Employees of Service Provider Organizations)* — This order authorizes a local health integration network (LHIN) to request that a contracted service provider organization provide health care and related social services in a setting identified by the LHIN. The order is needed to address staffing issues at long-term care homes and retirement homes in an expedited way, through the use of existing LHIN relationships with service providers.
- *O. Reg. 157/20 (Work Deployment Measures for Municipalities)* — This order was issued at the request of municipalities to provide flexibility to redeploy staff to ensure front-line services continue to be delivered in critical areas of need. The continuity of service delivery at the municipal level is critical to the health and safety of Ontario's communities and efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- *O. Reg. 158/20 (Limiting Work to a Single Retirement Home)* — This order requires retirement home employees to work in only one retirement home, long-term care home, or other health care setting, and allows fully immunized employees to work in more than one location, to safely increase staffing capacity. Limiting work to a single retirement home remains crucial for unimmunized staff to help prevent and contain infection spread.
- *O. Reg. 163/20 (Work Deployment Measures for Mental Health and Addictions Agencies)* — This order authorizes mental health and addiction agencies to take any reasonably necessary measure with respect to work deployment and staffing in order to respond to, prevent, and alleviate the outbreak of COVID-19. It enables agencies to maintain health human resources flexibility during the pandemic.
- *O. Reg. 177/20 (Congregate Care Settings)* — This order has been extended so that staff movement across multiple employers in developmental intervenor services, violence against women, and anti-human trafficking sectors will continue to be limited. This infection prevention measure protects staff and vulnerable clients.
- *O. Reg. 192/20 (Certain Persons Enabled to Issue Medical Certificates of Death)* — This order allows registered nurses appointed as coroner investigators to complete medical certificates of death instead of a physician or a nurse practitioner. It continues to give physicians and nurse practitioners more time to focus on patient care during the pandemic.
- *O. Reg. 193/20 (Hospital Credentialing Processes)* — This order enables hospitals to maintain flexible health human resources during the pandemic. It allows hospitals to quickly appoint, reappoint, and grant privileges to

physicians and other professional staff—regardless of applicable professional credentialing processes—to prevent and alleviate COVID-19 outbreaks as they occur.

- *O. Reg. 195/20 (Treatment of Temporary COVID-19 Related Payments to Employees)* — This order ensures that any temporary COVID-19-related payments received by employees in relation to work performed while the order is in effect are excluded from the maximum increases in compensation permitted during a moderation period set out in the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act*. This includes the temporary wage enhancements for personal support workers and direct support workers.
- *O. Reg. 210/20 (Management of Long-Term Care Homes in Outbreak)* — This order provides the Ministry’s director of long-term care with expanded authority under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act* to issue a mandatory management order to long-term care homes. The director is able to place interim management to effectively protect residents from COVID-19. Maintaining the management order allows the director to swiftly take appropriate action to reduce or alleviate harm to residents and staff in homes that are in outbreak.
- *O. Reg. 240/20 (Management of Retirement Homes in Outbreak)* — This order ensures measures are in place to allow the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority to act quickly should an operator be unable or unwilling to manage operations at a home where there is a COVID-19-related risk of harm to residents. It remains crucial to ensure retirement homes are following COVID-19 measures that protect the safety of residents and staff.
- *O. Reg. 345/20 (Patios)* — This order helps municipalities quickly pass or make changes to temporary-use bylaws that permit restaurants and bars to create or extend their patios to facilitate appropriate distancing and maintain public health measures.

## Concluding Remarks

Concluding her presentation to the Committee, the Solicitor General said that although Ontario “is closer to normal than it has been since this pandemic began,” the province would remain in Step 3 of the Road Map until the following criteria have been met:

- 80% of the eligible population aged 12 and over have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and 75% have received a second dose;
- 70% of the eligible population in each public health unit has been fully vaccinated; and
- other key public health and health care indicators continue to remain stable or trend downward.

Once these thresholds are reached, most of the remaining public health and workplace safety measures, such as capacity limits for social gatherings and limits for indoor and outdoor settings, can be lifted.

The Solicitor General stressed, however, that achieving these goals depends to a large extent on the continuing efforts of the public:

The overall reduction of COVID-19 cases in Ontario is proof that vaccines are our best defence against this virus. To maintain this positive momentum and these benefits to our communities, the message to Ontario is to remain vigilant, get vaccinated, encourage others to get vaccinated, and follow these public health and workplace safety measures.

## DISCUSSION

The Committee's session with the Solicitor General concluded with questions from Committee Members on a range of pandemic-related issues. This discussion is summarized below.

- **Vaccine Rollout (Vulnerable Populations)** — **Question:** Many vulnerable Ontarians, including house-bound seniors, reportedly have not received a first vaccination. What is the government doing to ensure that public health units have the resources necessary to reach these people? **Solicitor General's Response:** The vaccine task force initially had three priorities: first, prevent mortality (which it did by targeting congregate living settings such as long-term care and retirement homes, and correctional facilities); second, prevent serious illness; and third, prevent transmission. That plan worked very effectively. Once we had a sufficient supply of vaccines, we were able to expand the roll out to hard-hit areas such as Toronto Public Health and Peel Public Health. These units received vaccines over their initial per-population allocation for the purpose of targeting vulnerable citizens. In Peel, for example, a 24-hour clinic operated by the region's medical officer of health reportedly was very effective at targeting those who do not work traditional nine-to-five hours. First-dose vaccination in Peel is now at 79% and second-dose is at 61%. In addition to vaccine supply, the province has helped to organize many faith-based and business-based vaccination clinics. Reaching the last 15% to 20% of the population, however, will take longer. One way to close the remaining vaccination gap is for those who have concerns or questions to talk with their primary care practitioners.
- **Case Numbers** — **Question:** Since entering the Roadmap to Reopen framework last June, has the province experienced an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases? **Solicitor General's Response:** All 34 public health units plus the Ministry of Health are closely monitoring this. We did not see higher numbers in Step 1 or Step 2. One of the reasons for this has been the success of the province's vaccine rollout, which compares well with other jurisdictions, including those that had access to vaccines long before Ontario.



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- **Travel Precautions — Question:** With the easing of restrictions, some Ontarians are planning to travel. What precautions should they keep in mind? **Solicitor General's Response:** As of today, the federal government is still discouraging non-essential travel. That's an important consideration for people who are looking at travelling outside of Canada. Travellers should also be aware of the federal government's ArriveCAN app, which allows you to enter mandatory travel information on arrival in Canada. In Ontario, we know that the Delta variant represents over 80% of new cases and that it transmits more easily than the original Alpha variant. That said, every public health unit, every region, every community is in step 3. So what you can safely do in the City of Toronto you can safely do in Sudbury and North Bay. In terms of general advice, people should monitor information posted by the federal government about travelling outside of the country, and should be aware of any travel restrictions in other parts of Canada.
  - **Travel Restrictions (Vaccinations) — Question:** What are the vaccination requirements for travelling outside of Ontario, and in particular to the United States? **Solicitor General's Response:** Some states require that visitors be fully vaccinated, although it should be noted that these issues are the subject of ongoing discussions between the US and Canadian governments. The federal government has given its assurances that it will continue to monitor and test visitors to Canada for variants at the border. Again, it should be kept in mind that the federal government continues to discourage non-essential travel, and depending on which state or country you intend to visit, you should continue to monitor what restrictions, if any, apply, including quarantine, testing, and proof of vaccine requirements.
  - **Technical Briefing — Question:** It is important that the Select Committee receive a briefing from the experts; that is, from people other than the political leadership of the Vaccine Task Force. Can the Solicitor General commit to providing the Committee with a technical briefing from "the people who are the boots on the ground"? **Solicitor General's Response:** The former Chief Medical Officer of Health has appeared before this Committee, as has the Minister of Health, and most public health units continue to meet regularly with their elected officials to update them on what is happening locally on the ground. So in terms of hearing directly from the boots on the ground, that has happened both here, at the Select Committee, as well as locally with public health units.
  - **Vaccine Task Force (Appointment and Decision-making) — Question:** How were the members of the Vaccine Task Force selected? What was the rationale for the decisions the Task Force made with respect to vaccine distribution? **Solicitor General's Response:** Members of the Task Force were appointed by orders-in-council and include primary care practitioners, public health doctors, pharmacists, ethicists, and clinicians. With respect to how decisions were made, it should be stressed that initial difficulties with distribution reflected the lack of vaccine supply. If Ontario had had sufficient vaccines, we would not have had to make difficult decisions on who needs it soonest, who is going to benefit the most by receiving it first, and how to expand vaccination rates by extending the

time between first and second doses. All of those decisions, it should be noted, were made with advice from the science table and clinicians, and underpinned by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization and Health Canada.

- **Vaccine Task Force (Advisers) — Question:** According to media reports, the government appointed several advisers to the Vaccine Task Force, in addition to the order-in-council appointments that were made public. These advisers reportedly had ties to the former head of the Task Force. Could the Solicitor General indicate how these appointments were made? **Solicitor General's Response:** It is important to remember that when the Task Force was established in December 2020, we were still waiting for Health Canada to approve the first vaccine, and that we were preparing for what we knew was going to be a limited supply. So the Vaccine Task Force, with members including retired General Rick Hillier as well as epidemiologists, clinicians, primary care practitioners, and pharmacists, worked together on ways to prevent mortality, prevent serious illness, and prevent transmission, knowing that we did not have an unlimited amount of vaccine supply coming in. The limitation on inventory meant that we had to be very strategic in terms of how we were going to use the vaccine, where we were going to use it, and how quickly we could get it to the most vulnerable.
- **Sole-sourced Contracts (Spartan Bioscience) — Question:** In 2020 Public Health Ontario awarded a contract to Spartan Bioscience to provide rapid COVID-19 testing devices. The devices ultimately proved to be ineffective and the company filed for creditor protection in 2021. Who directed Public Health Ontario to award this contract? Who ensures that a company can meet its contractual obligations? How much has the province paid out to Spartan Bioscience? **Solicitor General's Response:** First, it would be more appropriate to direct these questions to Public Health Ontario. In any event, the details of contracts that have been given out as part of the pandemic response, including the purchasing of personal protective equipment and testing, will be disclosed through the estimates and public accounts process. In addition, the Financial Accountability Officer and the Auditor General are providing oversight of pandemic-related spending.
- **Sole-sourced Contracts (Generally) — Question:** According to media reports, other sole-sourced contracts awarded during the pandemic appear to have connections to the government. Could the Solicitor General comment on the value of such contracts, especially during a pandemic? Are there procurement policies in place to prevent political influence in the procurement process? **Solicitor General's Response:** First, the government categorically denies the suggestion that the reason these contracts were awarded was in any way due to political influence; rather, they were awarded because the need was there in the middle of a pandemic. The estimates and public accounts process will bear that out. With respect to the value of sole-sourced contracts, they are necessary when the government needs to act quickly to protect the public. For example, at the beginning of the pandemic, when we understood that without vaccines people needed to be protected through the use of personal protective equipment

(PPE), we were literally in bidding wars with countries around the world for PPE. What we discovered is that when we do not have Ontario- or Canada-based companies making this equipment, we are at risk. As a result of the government's efforts, we now have, in Ontario, 3M making PPE. If we are looking at lessons learned, one is that we do not want to be relying upon one or two countries to provide PPE.

- **Return to Normal — Question:** When can Ontarians expect a return to something resembling normal life, including activities such as dancing, singing, live theatre, and concerts? **Solicitor General's Response:** In Step 3 of the Roadmap to Reopen we are loosening restrictions. At the same time, we understand that certain types of behaviour carry a higher risk of transmitting COVID-19. Accordingly, limited restrictions will remain in effect for the time being; however, as we continue with the vaccine rollout, there will be a gradual lifting of those restrictions as well. In the specific areas of heritage, culture, and sport, it should be noted that the Ontario Trillium Foundation (with additional funding from the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries) has initiated the Resilient Communities Fund to assist not-for-profit and charitable organizations during the pandemic. These grants have allowed venues to modify their set-ups to protect customers and employees, and also to safely reopen. We as leaders need to encourage people to get vaccinated as quickly as possible, because the higher the vaccination rate, the less likely the virus will spread and the sooner we can return to normal.
- **Exiting Step 3 (Benchmarks) — Question:** What are the benchmarks for exiting Step 3? How were they determined? **Solicitor General's Response:** Two of the key benchmarks are that at least 80% of eligible Ontario residents aged 12 and over must have received at least one dose of vaccine, and that at least 75% of the eligible population must have received a second dose and are therefore fully vaccinated. In addition, we need to stay in Step 3 for about 21 days so that we can monitor trends such as the test positivity rate, hospitalizations, and ICU capacity. Monitoring will be done on the advice of the province's science advisory table, medical experts, and organizations like the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).
- **Return to the Workplace — Question:** According to a May 2021 Statistics Canada report, up to 80% of workers want to continue working from home. With the easing of restrictions, when can we expect to return to the workplace? What is your advice to employees and employers? **Solicitor General's Response:** In Step 2, the advice was, "If you can work from home, then please do so." In Step 3, that restriction has been lifted. As a result, many employees and business owners will decide how they want to return to work, safely. I note that in the Ministry of the Solicitor General (a 24/7 operational ministry involving police, fire, corrections, probation, and parole), employees have continued to work safely on site, with proper PPE. I want to specifically thank them for the work that they have been doing throughout the pandemic.

- **Advice re Social Gatherings** — **Question:** Could the Solicitor General provide advice on how to conduct social gatherings, such as weddings, in a safe way? **Solicitor General's Response:** The regulation that I point to most often is O. Reg. 263/20 (Rules for Areas in Step 2). Schedule 3 to the regulation lays out very specifically the health protection advice regarding both inside and outside celebrations.
- **Vaccinations and Hospitalizations** — **Question:** Other jurisdictions experienced lower hospitalization rates after their populations received at least one dose of vaccine. Has this happened in Ontario? **Solicitor General's Response:** What we have found so far—and this includes our experience with the variants that are currently in Ontario—is that if you do test positive for COVID-19, you are far less likely to have to be hospitalized or admitted to intensive care if you have had at least one dose. We will need to watch whether this trend holds in other parts of the country, where they are dealing with variants that have not yet reached Ontario.

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**APPENDIX A:  
TERMS OF REFERENCE\***

That a Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight be appointed to receive oral reports from the Premier or his designate(s) on any extensions of emergency orders by the Lieutenant Governor in Council related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rationale for those extensions; and

That the Committee shall have a membership of up to eleven Members, comprised as follows:

- Up to seven members of the Government party
- Up to three members of the Official Opposition
- Up to one Independent Member; and

That the House Leaders of each of the Recognized Parties shall indicate in writing to the Clerk of the House, their Party's membership on the Committee; and

That the Government House Leader, in consultation with the Independent Members, shall indicate in writing to the Clerk of the House, the Independent Member on the Committee; and

That the deadline for indicating Committee Membership with the Clerk of the House shall be Thursday, August 20, 2020; and

That the Committee shall meet at the call of the Chair as follows:

- Up to 30 minutes for the Premier or his designate(s) to make an opening statement
- Up to 60 minutes for Members of the recognized Parties to pose questions to the Premier or his designate(s) in 3 rounds of 10 minutes for each Party
- Up to 10 minutes for the Independent Member to pose questions to the Premier or his designate(s) in 2 rounds of 5 minutes each
- Report writing in closed session; and

That the Clerk of the Committee shall convene the first meeting of the Committee no later than Thursday, August 27, 2020 to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee, but no Sub-committee shall be appointed; and

That for business conducted under this order of reference, the provisions of Standing Orders 38 (b), (c), and (d) and 134 (c) and (d) shall be suspended.

That the Committee is authorized to present interim reports summarizing each hearing to the House, or deposit interim reports with the Clerk if the Legislature is not in session; and

That the Committee's final report shall be a compilation of all interim reports; and

That the Committee shall be dissolved 30 days following the Government House Leader indicating in writing to the Speaker that the Committee is no longer required; and

That the Committee's final report shall be tabled in the House, or deposited with the Clerk if the Legislature is not in session, before the Committee is dissolved; and

That if the Committee fails to meet this deadline the cumulative interim reports shall be deemed to be the Committee's final report and deemed to be tabled on the date that the Committee is dissolved; and

That an Order shall be placed on the *Orders and Notices Paper* for discussion of the Final Report of the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight following its presentation to the House.

*\* Votes and Proceedings, July 15, 2020, 42nd Parliament, 1st Session*