

Legislative
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SELECT COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT

SEVENTEETH INTERIM REPORT

2nd Session, 42nd Parliament
71 Elizabeth II

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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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Daryl Kramp'.

Daryl Kramp, MPP
Chair of the Committee

Queen's Park
February 2022

SELECT COMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT MEMBERSHIP LIST

2nd Session, 42nd Parliament

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*LINDSEY PARK was replaced by DONNA SKELLY on October 20, 2021.

LORNE COE, FRANCE GÉLINAS and DAVE SMITH regularly served as substitute members of the Committee.

CHRISTOPHER TYRELL
Clerk of the Committee

LAUREN WARNER
Research Officer

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INTRODUCTION

On November 25, 2021, the Select Committee on Emergency Management Oversight met for the seventeenth time to receive an update on COVID-19 emergency orders. Issued in the first months of the pandemic under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, these orders have been continued as regulations under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020* (“the *Reopening Ontario Act*”).

Ontario’s Solicitor General appeared as the Premier’s designate to provide an oral report and respond to Committee questions. The Solicitor General’s presentation and discussion with Committee members is summarized below. To view the Solicitor General’s full remarks and all questions posed by Committee members, the reader is referred to the official *Hansard* transcript.

Further interim reports and a final report will follow.

It should be noted that this report reflects the situation in Ontario on November 25, 2021. As of that date, Ontario’s 34 public health units remained at Step 3 of the Province’s Steps of Reopening. On October 22, 2021, Ontario released A Plan to Safely Reopen Ontario and Manage COVID-19 for the Long-Term, which outlines the Province’s approach to lifting remaining public health and workplace safety measures under the *Reopening Ontario Act* and regulations.

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.

Reporting provisions under the *Reopening Ontario Act* include a requirement that the Premier (or a Minister to whom the Premier delegates the responsibility) appear before and report to a standing or select committee designated by the Assembly, at least once every 30 days, concerning

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

Hearings consist of an opening statement from the Premier or his designate(s), followed by Committee member questions. 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, presented to the Committee on November 25, 2021.

The Solicitor General began by noting that the *Reopening Ontario Act* has been extended in the Legislature until March 28, 2022. The report on amendments and extensions of orders under the *Reopening Ontario Act*, from July 24, 2020 to July 24, 2021, has also been tabled and is available online.

The Solicitor General also noted that Health Canada recently approved a COVID-19 vaccine for children aged five to eleven. Ontario has received 1,076,000 doses of the pediatric Pfizer vaccine, which are being distributed to public health units, pharmacies, and primary care settings. There will be multiple options to book pediatric vaccination appointments including through the Ontario COVID-19 portal and public health units, at pharmacies, and with select primary care providers.

The Solicitor General also said that the government is expanding the number of COVID-19 testing locations to make access to publicly-funded testing more convenient. New testing options include PCR tests in select pharmacies (for eligible individuals), take-home PCR self-collection tests, and pop-up sites for asymptomatic testing in higher traffic public settings. Rapid tests will also be distributed to public schools ahead of the December school break to add a layer of protection. Each public school student will get five rapid tests to use over the holidays, and all First Nations schools will also be able to participate.

The Solicitor General concluded her opening remarks by stating that there is now more COVID-19 behind us than ahead of us. While we cannot become complacent, vaccines and public health measures, such as masking and physical distancing, have set the stage for a more open holiday season than last year.

Amended Orders

The following orders under the *Reopening Ontario Act* have been amended or revoked since October 5, 2021, when the Solicitor General provided an update to the whole House on the status of orders.

O. Reg. 364/20 (Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step) has been amended to remove capacity limits in additional settings, such as restaurants, bars, and gyms, where proof of vaccination is required. In addition, businesses and organizations such as personal care settings and museums, will not be subject to capacity limits if they elect to require proof of vaccination from patrons.

The amendments provide that the requirement to maintain a two-metre physical distance applies where businesses or organizations elect to require proof of

vaccination from patrons. They also require the person responsible for locations where a wedding, funeral, religious service, rite, or ceremony is held to ensure that the number of persons in the room is limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres, if the location elects to require attendees to provide proof of vaccination.

O. Reg. 364/20 was also amended to exempt bars, restaurants, and other food and drink establishments in most parts of airports after security screening from proof of vaccination requirements. This is because proof of vaccination is already required for passengers prior to security screening.

O. Reg. 364/20 was further amended in respect of outdoor events. The 100 person limit on outdoor gatherings has been removed to allow ceremonies, holiday parades, and other outdoor organized public events with a greater number of persons. The rules require that every person wear a mask or face covering at outdoor organized gatherings if they are unable to maintain at least a two-metre distance from those outside of their household.

A housekeeping amendment was also made to O. Reg. 364/20 to clarify that the general capacity limit to maintain a physical distance of two metres does not apply to personal care settings, such as hair salons and barber shops, where they opt into the proof of vaccination requirements.

After consulting with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the government has paused the lifting of capacity limits in remaining higher-risk settings where proof of vaccination is required, such as night clubs, strip clubs, sex clubs, and bathhouses.

O. Reg. 132/20 (Use of Force and Firearms in Policing Services) was revoked effective November 16, 2021. This order allowed chiefs of police to authorize certain members of a police service to perform duties involving use of force, and to carry a firearm, if the member had successfully completed required training within the previous 24 months of this authorization, instead of the annual training required under the *Police Services Act*.

Extended Orders

The following orders under the *Reopening Ontario Act* have not been amended since the last Committee meeting. They remain in effect and have been extended until December 16, 2021. Orders are listed in numerical order and include the Solicitor General's 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 to respond to, prevent, and alleviate the outbreak of COVID-19, including redeploying staff to other sites within the

organization or to other health service providers, long-term-care homes, or retirement homes.

- *O. Reg. 76/20 (Electronic Service)* — This order requires document service in legal matters against the Crown to be done electronically instead of in person. The order is needed to promote access to justice while reducing unnecessary contact between individuals in order to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- *O. Reg. 77/20 (Work Deployment Measures in Long-Term Care Homes)* — This order allows work deployment measures in long-term care homes to be developed and modified based on staffing priorities and abilities. It allows homes to implement redeployment plans as required. This is to alleviate the effects of COVID-19 and deal with staff shortages and increased care required to address an outbreak. Long-term care homes continue to rely on this regulation to help stabilize staffing levels, which is crucial to preventing and addressing 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. It enables homes to better focus resources on providing high-quality resident care and safety needs of residents. The flexibility provided by these provisions continues to be required in long-term care homes due to recover from current and earlier waves.
- *O. Reg. 98/20 (Prohibition on Certain Persons Charging Unconscionable Prices for Sales of Necessary Goods)* — This order is in place so that consumers can 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.
- *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 measures with respect to work deployment and staffing 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 homes to operate, recruit, and reassign

- staff. It remains crucial to 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 their 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. 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 enable the Province to respond to COVID-19 care, surgical backlogs, 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 service program, to continue to have the authority and flexibility they need to redeploy their 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 long-term-care 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. Limiting partially and unvaccinated staff from moving across multiple settings continues to be an important component of infection prevention and control. The Minister's Directive *Long-Term Care Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy* has been updated to reflect the revised recommendation from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization regarding the optimal interval between the first and second doses. The update gave staff, support workers, students, and volunteers who showed proof of a first dose on or by November 15 until December 13, 2021, to show proof of their second dose.
 - *O. Reg. 154/20 (Work Deployment Measures for District Social Services Administration Boards)* — This order provides district social services administration boards with the 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), now operating as home and community care support services (HCCSS), to request that a contracted service provider organization provide health care and related social services in a setting identified by the home and community care support service and authorizes the HCCSS to fund these services. The order is needed to address staffing issues in priority settings (including long-term care homes and retirement homes) in an expedited manner, using existing HCCSS relationships.
- *O. Reg. 157/20 (Work Deployment Measures for Municipalities)* — Issued at the request of municipalities, this order provides 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 critical for unvaccinated 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 addictions agencies to take any reasonably necessary measures with respect to work deployment and staffing to respond to, prevent, and alleviate the outbreak of COVID-19 to maintain health human resources flexibility.
- *O. Reg. 177/20 (Congregate Care Settings)* — This order has been extended so that staff movement across multiple employers in developmental services, intervenor services, and violence against women and anti-human trafficking sectors will continue to be limited. This infection prevention measure protects staff and vulnerable clients. Staff members who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are exempt from the requirement to work for one employer in the same sector, except in the event of COVID-19 outbreak.

- *O. Reg. 193/20 (Hospital Credentialing Processes)* — This order authorizes the board of a hospital to take any reasonably necessary measures with respect to any aspect of the hospital's credentialing process to respond to, prevent, and alleviate the outbreak of COVID-19. This includes identifying medical, dental, midwifery, and extended class nursing staff needs and priorities, extending existing hospital credentials for board-approved professional staff, and expediting the appointment of new professional staff.
- *O. Reg. 195/20 (Treatment of Temporary COVID-19 Related Payments to Employees)* — This order ensures that any temporary COVID-related payments received by employees in relation to work performed while the order is in effect are excluded from the maximum increases in compensation set out in the *Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act* during a moderation period. 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 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 in the case of an outbreak, should an operator be unwilling or unable 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 appropriate COVID-19 measures for resident and staff safety.
- *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

In closing, the Solicitor General stated that while COVID-19 is not going away, it can be tamed. Indeed, much has changed since the arrival of vaccines for adults, and much is about to change again with the arrival of a pediatric vaccine. However, we cannot let our guard down. The Solicitor General noted that the most vulnerable are the unvaccinated, who are 24 times more likely to be hospitalized and 43 times more likely to be admitted to intensive care (than the vaccinated).

As of November 21, 86% of eligible Ontarians age 12 and up are fully vaccinated, and 89% have received a first dose. This is a major step in bringing the pandemic to an end. Until then, orders under the *Reopening Ontario Act* will be another defence against the spread of COVID-19.

DISCUSSION

The Solicitor General's discussion with Committee Members on various pandemic-related issues is summarized below.

- **Price Gouging — Question:** Has Cabinet used its authority under the *Reopening Ontario Act* regulations to investigate price gouging? **Solicitor General's Response:** The regulation actually allows the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS) to accept and assess complaints from individuals about price gouging. If verified, the matter would be turned over to the police for investigation. The Solicitor General does not have a "line of sight" into ongoing investigations; however, it is her understanding that investigations and referrals have been happening. Cabinet and the Solicitor General's office would not be tracking ongoing investigations. The MGCS would be better placed to answer questions about the number of investigations and referrals.
- **Price Gouging (Number of Complaints) — Question:** Will you ask the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services for a list of price gouging complaints? **Solicitor General's Response:** The government House leader would be the most appropriate pathway through which to make that request.
- **COVID-19 Testing in Pharmacies — Question:** People who are ill may transmit the disease more readily at pharmacies than at hospital-based assessment centres. So why is the government moving more testing into pharmacies as opposed to expanding current testing sites? What does the government do if a pharmacy wants to do COVID-19 testing but is not well set up for it, and what kind of safety assurances are there? **Solicitor General's Response:** Pharmacists are regulated health professionals who are used to, and use, personal protective equipment. Further, pharmacies are not required to do COVID-19 testing if they do not have the appropriate space, staff, or health care human resources. The assurances are that pharmacists are regulated health professionals who understand PPE protocols, and can make a determination about whether they want to do testing based on their physical space. They are professionals who can lay it out properly, and have the assistance of the Ministry of Health.

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- **COVID-19 Testing in Pharmacies — Question:** Do pharmacies who want to provide COVID-19 testing need to go through an application and inspection process? **Solicitor General's Response:** There is a submissions process through the Ministry of Health; pharmacies would work with and go through the Ministry's pharmacy division.
 - **Emergency Orders (Revocation and Expiry of Orders) — Question:** How many regulations under the *Reopening Ontario Act* have been revoked or let expire? **Solicitor General's Response:** We are aligning the *Reopening Ontario Act* with what the Ministry of Health and the Chief Medical Officer of Health have said is a path to safely reopen. Other jurisdictions have tried to move too quickly, by lifting masking indoors, and it has impacted their ability to move forward. As the government sees that some restrictions are no longer needed, the government does lift orders prior to their expiry date. As we learn more about COVID-19, we can lift the restrictions and protections that are not as needed.
 - **Emergency Orders (Pausing Reopening) — Question:** You have indicated that you expected a rise in case counts as we move into the winter, but if hospital and intensive care capacity is fine, why has the reopening plan been paused? **Solicitor General's Response:** We have taken a slow and measured approach to reopening. Gradually loosening restrictions is easier for individuals to understand than a constant back and forth. That is why there was a pause on reopening some of the most high-risk engagements, such as bathhouses. It is not a complete roll-back, but it is an admission that there are places that have a higher risk of transmission.
 - **Extension of the Reopening Ontario Act — Question:** Can you explain the distinction between the legislative extension to March 2022 and the actual orders themselves? **Solicitor General's Response:** The extension of the *Reopening Ontario Act* does more closely align with the proposed health plan to allow restrictions to be removed. For example, initially the ability to sign documents digitally was in an emergency order, but now the Attorney General has made that change elsewhere and we have been able to remove it from the emergency orders. So some emergency orders are not needed anymore but have been incorporated into other pieces of legislation.
 - **Emergencies Legislation and the Reopening Ontario Act — Question:** Can you share the differences between the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) and the *Reopening Ontario Act*? Both pieces of legislation allow the government to take pretty extraordinary measures; for example, limiting the number of people that can attend a place of worship. **Solicitor General's Response:** First, it should be noted that religious rites and ceremonies are exempt from the *Reopening Ontario Act* and the EMCPA. In terms of the differences between the two pieces of legislation, when you have a specific emergency that would involve, for example, the need to evacuate people, the EMCPA would allow us to do that. The other

- piece is that a control was put under the *Reopening Ontario Act* to ensure that no additional regulatory authority could be added. This control was put in the legislation to ensure that all legislators would have the ability to have input and debate whether we were going to have the need to expand beyond the current protections.
- ***Vaccines (Leadership of Vaccine Roll-out)*** — **Question:** With the Vaccine Task Force disbanded, who is in charge of the vaccine rollout now? **Solicitor General's Response:** The Minister of Health and the Solicitor General.
 - ***Vaccines (Eligibility for Booster Shots)*** — **Question:** Ontario has four million vaccines that have not been used yet, so why have we not expanded eligibility for booster shots? Are there concerns about capacity to administer both booster shots and pediatric vaccinations? **Solicitor General's Response:** The Chief Medical Officer of Health has always aligned very closely with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). NACI recommendations are the primary driver of these decisions, which is why we decided to offer some immunocompromised individuals boosters sooner.
 - ***Vaccines (Tracking and Herd Immunity)*** — **Question:** Is the Province tracking when every Ontarian who wants to be vaccinated will be, and is there a percentage at which we would consider Ontario vaccinated enough? **Solicitor General's Response:** With respect to herd immunity, we do not know what we do not know. However, we know a lot more now about COVID-19 and we will use the lessons we have learned to drive the vaccination plan. Mass vaccination clinics were very successful, and our hospital partners stepped up. We also have the GO-VAXX bus, which is a partnership with Metrolinx that involves buses going to places like malls and farmers markets. We are tracking who is utilizing it, and almost 50% are people getting their first dose. We will continue to be creative and think outside the box.
 - ***Vaccines (Children)*** — **Question:** Some parents are anxious about vaccinating their children, can you explain a bit about the process and the pediatric vaccine? **Solicitor General's Response:** The pediatric vaccine has been approved by Health Canada and we distribute it slightly differently; there will be eight weeks between first and second doses. We have partnered with children's hospitals so that parents can have experts answer their questions. There is a disturbing upward trend of COVID-19 cases in school-age children. While children do not tend to be impacted as seriously by COVID-19, there is a large percentage of cases amongst school-age children. Having the opportunity to expand vaccination to five to eleven-year-olds is a "game changer" for parents.

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- **Vaccines (*Immunization of School Pupils Act*)** — **Question:** Why has the government not added the COVID-19 vaccine to the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*, at least for ages 12-17? **Solicitor General's Response:** Based on information from public health units, there is a large percentage of parents who would love to get their children vaccinated as soon as possible. There is also a group that wants to have direct conversations with their primary care practitioner, their pharmacist, or a trusted health professional. We want those conversations to happen because these are important decisions. I will work with the Minister of Health to make sure that we have resources from pediatric hospitals so that parents have access to information.
 - **Paid Sick Days (*Children's Vaccination Appointments*)** — **Question:** Based on the wording of the paid sick days' legislation, it is unclear whether the days can be used to take children to vaccination appointments. Will the government clarify that point, or correct or change the legislation? **Solicitor General's Response:** My understanding from the Minister of Labour is that parents can use paid sick days to go to vaccination appointments.
 - **Long-Term Care (*Renewal of Licences*)** — **Question:** Is the government moving to renew licences for private operators of long-term care homes at a quicker than normal pace in advance of the next election? **Solicitor General's Response:** To the contrary, the government is engaged to ensure that when people need long-term care there are options available locally. That is why the Minister of Long-Term Care announced a doubling of inspections. The government is committed to expanding the number and opportunities for long-term builds and expanding inspections.
 - **In-person Shopping** — **Question:** COVID-19 has been very challenging for local businesses. Are Ontarians free to return to in-person shopping this year? **Solicitor General's Response:** This is an important question as many of us are excited about the holidays and upcoming opportunities to support local businesses. Entrepreneurs and small businesses are the backbone of our economy. The pandemic's impact on the restaurant industry, particularly small operators, has been unprecedented: while indoor dining was prohibited, dining traffic plummeted by 90% in many cases. That is why we introduced and passed the *Supporting Local Restaurants Act*, which reduced food delivery fees. The government continues to listen to small and independent restaurants, along with leading associations, to make sure we are reacting and responding to what they need to safely reopen.
 - **Holiday Gatherings** — **Question:** Are there ways to safely gather for the holidays this year? **Solicitor General's Response:** It is important to understand and follow the guidelines from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and to have conversations with family and friends about whether they are vaccinated. COVID-19 is less of a threat now, but it is not behind us, so we need to wear masks indoors when we can, ask people if they have been vaccinated, and stay safe.

- **Public Gatherings (Office Parties) — Question:** The hospitality sector has been hit hard by COVID-19. Will restaurants and the hospitality sector be able to host office parties this year? **Solicitor General's Response:** Yes. Because we have the vaccine certificate program in place, restaurants and facilities can request that their patrons show proof of vaccination, which will allow us to get together and celebrate in person.
- **Public Gatherings (New Years' Eve) — Question:** What changes can we expect to see in ringing in the New Year? **Solicitor General's Response:** The biggest change this year will be the vaccine certificate program. Some hotels have noted that the program had an immediate impact on business; the program is comforting for both patrons and staff. It allows people to celebrate in public venues, and the government has tried to make it as convenient and easy as possible.
- **Rising Case Counts — Question:** Given the rising COVID-19 case counts, are you concerned that COVID-19 might not be behind us? **Solicitor General's Response:** We are learning more about COVID-19 week by week. While case counts are rising, the number of people in intensive care units has improved from three or four months ago. We will carefully monitor the situation. We do not want to become like other jurisdictions that have had to tighten restrictions again, but the path we have brought forward and the roll out of vaccinations has ensured that we have protected a great number of people.
- **Overall Pandemic Response — Question:** While some of the government's COVID-19 response measures have paid off, some of the things the government did, it did reluctantly. Is it a stretch to say that the government has done everything right? **Solicitor General Response:** We never said that. Think about what governments around the world had to deal with in terms of acquiring personal protective equipment, and the limitations with the amount of vaccines. If we had vaccines sooner we could have done more, but we did what we could with what we had.
- **COVID-19 Situation in Europe — Question:** Europe has high levels of vaccination and is still seeing increases in cases and is putting public health measures back in place. How can we ensure that this situation does not occur in Ontario? **Solicitor General's Response:** We are monitoring the situation elsewhere and, because of our ability to manage our intensive care capacity, we have been able to help out other jurisdictions such as Saskatchewan. We must continue to follow the recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, such as making sure customers wear masks and checking vaccine certificates. These measures will allow us to continue to do all of the things that we have missed over the last number of months.

**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*