

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislation Building, Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

May 05, 2020

Re: Learning the new normal: Balancing a Public Health and Socioeconomic Approach for Lifting Restrictions at the Regional Level in Ontario.

Dear Premier Ford:

We applaud your release of A Framework for Reopening our Province on April 27th and its clear articulation of foundational principles on which decisions about where and when to lift restrictions be built: evidence based, data driven and applied incrementally, using a phased approach to ensure changes made are proportional to risk.

Throughout this unprecedented situation, the Counties of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington and the City of Kingston have worked closely with KFL&A Public Health. This letter and attached proposal are a product of that great collaboration. Together we're asking the province to consider a regional approach to the easing of restrictions in places where the COVID-19 situation is evolving differently than other parts of the province.

We recognize there is no risk-free way to move forward. Swift and decisive actions of public health have made a difference to the shape of the curve we are driving. We must be equally prepared to manage our defenses against COVID-19 in the long term. To that end, we conducted a rapid scoping review of recent literature to understand whether a regionalized approach to lifting restrictions is feasible in the current pandemic situation, and to identify the criteria and capacities that would be necessary at a regional level to support a localized approach to lifting restrictions.

We have enclosed an evidence-informed proposal demonstrating the KFL&A region could, with its current capacity, move through a gradual easing of restrictions, applying Ontario's Framework for Reopening our Province. The proposed approach will be tailored to regional needs while balancing both health and socioeconomic outcomes over the long term. In the current situation, long term means until such time that a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 is made available or that national population immunity reaches a documented level of 70% or more. Our evidence review confirms that decisions related to lifting restrictions rely on a number of complex independent and interrelated factors—epidemiological, social, economic, health systems, and important local community needs—that will best be managed in alignment with regional level capacities.

Just as the implementation of municipal emergency response measures corresponded to regional surveillance indicators of community spread, so to could a phased approach to ease restrictions. A regionalized approach will permit close monitoring in a community context, matched with community capacity to mitigate consequences. A regionalized approach will



Letter to: Honourable Doug Ford
From: Dr. K. Moore, KFL&A Public Health, Medical Officer of Health
Mayor Paterson, City of Kingston
Warden Isbester, County of Lennox & Addington
Warden Smith, Frontenac County
Date: May 05, 2020

respect social values of the community to inform ways to move forward. In this way, we will identify and prepare to maintain competent, clear, simple and consistent messaging to our regional population, preparing them, informing and educating them, while appreciating their need for a sense of predictability and control. A regionalized approach enables real-time evaluation activities at a smaller, more nimble scale. In turn, with regional evaluation measures in place, we will collect rapid feedback related to specific easing activities and inform risk assessments. A regionalized approach will accelerate research and knowledge sharing about challenges and opportunities to inform actions of other jurisdictions and/or scale up full policy responses at a provincial level. Continued collaboration across jurisdictions is key.

Strategies to lift restrictions will draw upon both the science and art of public health practice, applying the expansive skills of public health units. The regionalized workforce is well supported by cooperative advisory networks from across the province and Public Health Ontario. A regionalized approach will continue to balance population health needs, but also, it will, by way of cautious and calibrated actions, inject hope into the hearts of Ontarians for the long term.

Sincerely,



Dr. Kieran Michael Moore
Medical Officer of Health
KFL&A



Bryan Paterson
Mayor
City of Kingston



Marg Isbester
Warden
County of Lennox & Addington



Frances Smith
Warden
County of Frontenac

cc. Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
James McGarvey, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Colleen Geiger, (Acting) President and CEO, Public Health Ontario

Attachments (2):
Regionalized Reopening Proposal KFL&A COVID-19
Lifting of Emergency Response Measures

