

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: January 14, 2021

Health Unit Closes Outdoor Public Skating Rinks and Tobogganing Hills

NORTH BAY, ON – The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) is requiring all outdoor public ice rinks, tobogganing hills and skating trails on public property across the district to be closed, effective January 14, 2021. This closure is done under the Medical Officer of Health’s ability to increase restrictions within their district.

In accordance with the provisions of the Emergency Management and Civil Protections Act, and the Regulations thereunder, specifically Stay-at-Home-Order, and the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, and the Regulations thereunder, specifically Rules for Areas in Stage 1, the Medical Officer of Health for the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit deems it reasonable and necessary to close all outdoor public ice rinks, tobogganing hills and skating trails throughout the entire district served by the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit in order to decrease or eliminate the risk to community health presented by COVID-19.

“We have been told to stay home and we need to do this. Travelling to skating rinks and tobogganing hills can increase risk of spread of COVID-19 when individuals choose to travel with people who they do not live with,” explains Dr. Jim Chirico, Medical Officer of Health. “Skating rinks and tobogganing hills are locations where we have seen a lot of individuals gather without physical distancing and many times without face coverings. While enjoying these amenities COVID-19 restrictions may get forgotten and put our community at risk.”

Outdoor physical activity, such as walking, running, playing outside and biking are important for physical and mental health and still recommended by the Health Unit. However, all activities outside the house need to be done with extreme caution, following the COVID-19 public health measures and should be done close to home.

“We have seen an increase of COVID-19 cases in our district over the past couple of weeks and have had two outbreaks in long-term care homes. We must do our part to help reduce the burden on our long-term care homes and hospitals by following public health measures and staying home except for essential reasons,” states Dr. Chirico.

If you think you may have COVID-19 symptoms or have been in close contact with someone who has it, first self-isolate and then use [Ontario's Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if you need to seek further care. If you need further assistance call your health care provider or the Health Unit at [1-800-563-2808](tel:1-800-563-2808). If you have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, you should call 911 and mention your symptoms.

Visit [Ontario’s website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

For more information please visit myhealthunit.ca/COVID-19.

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