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Tuesday, May 11 Update

Dear Neighbour,

Like you, I am so hopeful (and desperate) for a real summer. Case counts are going down, and soon 50% of Toronto residents will have received at least one vaccination shot.

But, problems persist. The vaccine rollout continues to be chaotic, the Ford government wants to make online learning permanent, and a new Financial Accountability Office report reveals that by September 2021, 419,200 surgeries will be backlogged, and about 2.5 million diagnostic procedures, such as cancer scans, will have been delayed for months. Read about these issues, get the latest legislative and community updates, and find how you can take action on key matters in this week's newsletter.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Bell".

Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

Queen's Park:

- [Join Our Townhall Thursday: Tenant Rights and a Fair Landlord and Tenant Board](#)
- [Up to 85% of eligible businesses applying to Ontario's small business program aren't getting help](#)
- [Tragic child death renews calls for safe roads](#)
- [Latest education announcements raising real concerns](#)

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)[scrap highway](#)

- [NDP calls for investigation following long-term care Commission Report](#)
- [Bill for safe drinking water for all Ontarians passes second reading](#)
- [I co-sponsor bill declaring May 10 an Anti-Asian Racism Day of Action](#)

Action Alerts:

- [My new bill will make companies disclose climate change risk](#)
- [Seniors should not have to worry about unfair evictions](#)
- [It's time to stop microplastics from entering Ontario waters](#)

Community:

- [Become a vision zero youth network ambassador](#)
- [New pollinator garden project in University-Rosedale needs your help!](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Town Hall for Toronto Residents](#)
- [Latest COVID-19 vaccine information](#)



Join Our Townhall Thursday: Tenant Rights and

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I am deeply concerned by Schedule 27 in Ontario's new [Bill 276](#), which if passed, will punish Ontarians who record and share proceedings at tribunals, including the Human Rights Tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). Those who do will now face fines of up to \$25,000.

Recordings by tenants [have helped inform the public the LTB is conducting a dangerous eviction blitz in the middle of a pandemic](#). They have also provided evidence of breaches of procedural fairness.

On **Thursday, May 13 from 6-7 PM** please join me and MPP Jill Andrew (Toronto—St. Paul's), Nina Hill of Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Services and more to talk about what these changes mean for tenants and how we can reform the LTB.

For event details, including how to register, [click here](#).

If the Ford government wants to help people stay safe and housed during the pandemic, they should stop punishing people trying to stay housed, and instead provide rental support, an eviction moratorium, and true LTB reform to ensure everyone quickly gets a fair hearing.



Up to 85% of eligible businesses applying to Ontario's small business program aren't getting help

Since the Ontario Small Business Support Grant (OSBSG) was launched, my office has heard from numerous businesses desperate for information on the status of their application. In an effort to learn more about how the OSBSG was working in University-Rosedale, I reached out to 14,000 residents and all Business Improvement Associations to survey their experiences accessing OSBSG. The results reveal the small business program is failing.

In University-Rosedale, 85% of eligible small businesses are still waiting for their grant, and many businesses reported their applications were denied for no reason at all. Small businesses have been struggling to pay the bills and keep the lights on throughout this pandemic and they desperately need financial support from the Ford government now.

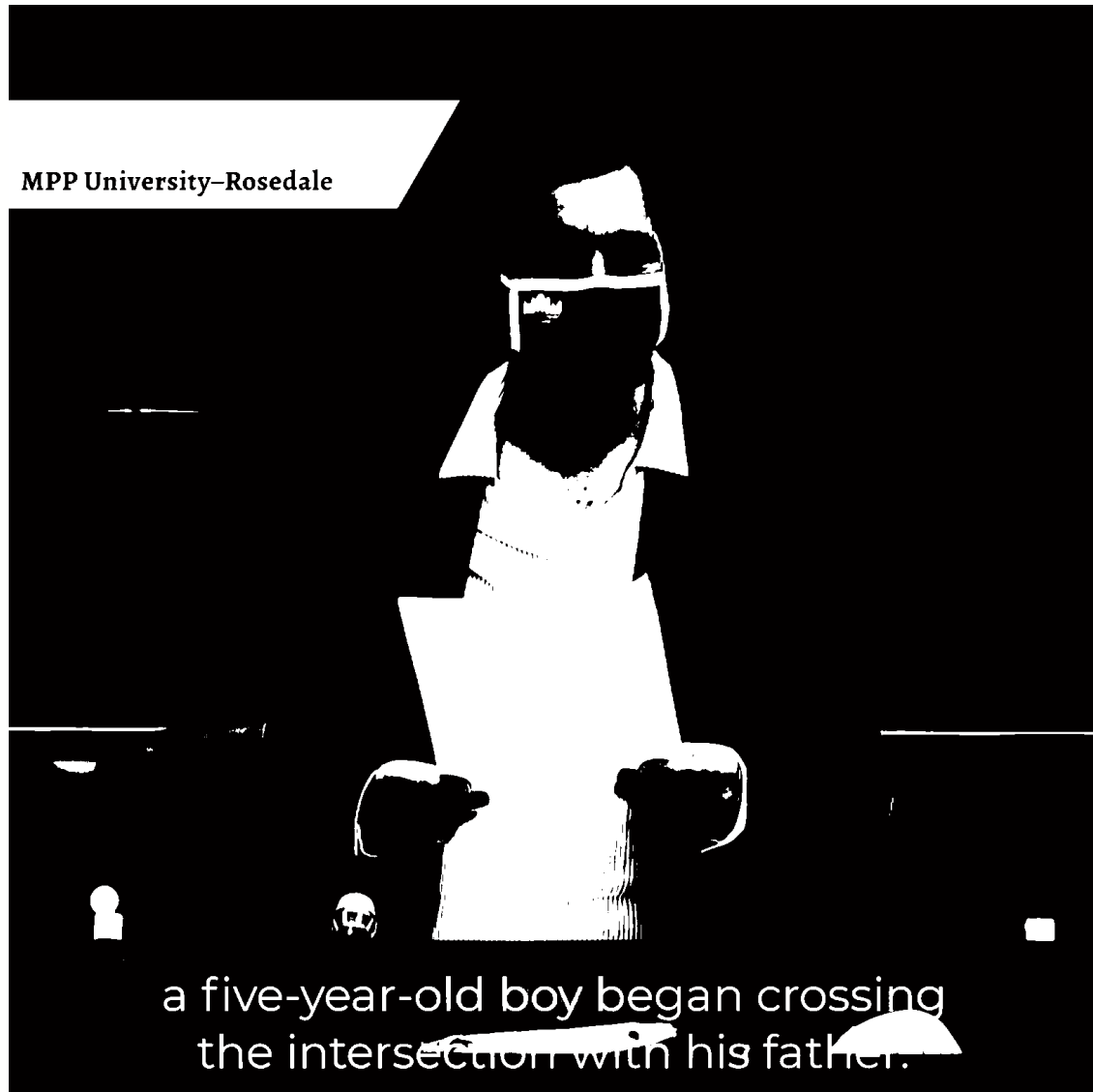
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OSBSG.

To watch my question to Premier, [click here](#).

To read my letter to the Minister of Finance, [click here](#).

For more information on how grant delays are impacting small businesses in University-Rosedale, you can read [this CBC article](#).



Tragic child road death renews calls for safe roads

On May 4th, [a five-year-old child was killed](#) after being struck by a vehicle while trying to cross the road with his bike in Mississauga. My deepest condolences

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Road deaths like this show that our current approach to road safety is failing. People are being killed biking home, older adults are afraid to cross the street, and parents are afraid to let their kids walk or ride bikes in their own neighbourhoods. We must be better than this. We need immediate action to stop people from being killed on our streets by reckless drivers. And now is the time to take action.

Last month, the Ford government introduced Bill 238 [Moving Ontarians More Safely Act](#) (MOMS Act). The MOMS Act includes some important road safety measures that I and my colleagues have been advocating for, including a key component of my [Doored But Not Ignored Bill](#) to require police to report on dooring incidents, and gives the City the authority to install safety cameras on streetcars so riders can exit and enter streetcars more safely. While these measures are important, we must do far more to make our roads far safer.

That's why I am calling on the Ford government to include my bill [Protecting Vulnerable Road Users Act](#) into the MOMS Act. The Vulnerable Road Users Act would bring in tougher penalties for drivers who kill and injure a pedestrian, road worker, or cyclist when they are breaking the law. I will be introducing this bill in committee on **Friday, May 14**, and asking MPP members in the [General Government Committee](#) to say yes to our amendment.

We have a right to make it home without being killed or injured by a car. The Ford government needs to step up and implement a provincial road safety strategy that will reduce deaths and injuries on Ontario's roads to zero.

To demand a stronger MOMS Act, [click here](#).

[Watch my full Member's Statement here](#).

To get involved in road safety organizing, please connect with [Cycle Toronto](#) and [Friends and Families for Safe Streets](#).



Latest education announcements raising real concerns

During a [press conference](#) on May 4, Minister of Education Stephen Lecce announced all Ontario school boards will be mandated to provide in-person and online learning for the next school year and confirmed the government is still considering making virtual learning a permanent option post-pandemic. There was no news about whether or not students might return to in-person classes this spring.

Online learning has been difficult for so many families. It has hurt kids' mental health. It's hurt learning, achievement, and grades. It's forced parents – especially women – out of the workforce. It's been a brutal juggling act for teachers and education workers, and it's made the playing field very uneven – kids that don't have their own space and computer with high-speed internet, and kids with disabilities, have suffered disproportionately.

and peers. The NDP will continue to push for COVID-safe schools including capped classes, better ventilation and upgrades like touchless faucets, more and permanent mental health supports, and classes capped at 15 for safety and better one-on-one attention. That's what I'm advocating for.

NDP urges Ford government to clear surgical and diagnostics backlog

Last week, we called on the Ford government to put together a plan to address the backlog of surgeries and medical procedures that have continued to pile up during the pandemic. The Financial Accountability Officer (FAO) projects that by September 2021, 419,200 surgeries will be backlogged. On top of that, 2.5 million diagnostic procedures, such as cancer scans, will have been delayed for months.

The FAO forecasts that Doug Ford needs to commit \$1.3 billion to clear this backlog. Right now, the 2021 budget falls a whopping \$700 million short of that. Ontarians that need cancer treatments, and those dealing with chronic pain do not know when their treatments will take place and are being forced to wait while their conditions go untreated and even get worse.

In contrast, the NDP BC government was able to clear 95 per cent of its surgical backlog in March by allocating funds and releasing a public plan to complete those procedures. Doug Ford needs to take this issue seriously and commit the necessary resources to address the problem. If BC can do it, so can we.

Feds taking over Highway 413 assessment a step forward in NDP plan to scrap highway

The Federal government has announced that it will undertake an environmental assessment of Doug Ford's planned Highway 413. This previously cancelled highway was revived by the Ford government despite substantial evidence that it would increase greenhouse gas emissions, harm productive farmland, threaten vulnerable species, and cut directly through the protected Greenbelt.

We are thankful for the vocal opposition of environmental advocates, community groups, and municipal councils that have called for the highway's cancellation. We believe that this is a crucial step towards ensuring this dangerous and useless highway is never built.

step to ensure that Ontario farms, rivers, and environmentally significant spaces are protected from thoughtless development. The NDP is committed to scrapping this wasteful project and ensuring that special interests do not override the interests of all Ontarians.

NDP calls for investigation following Long-term care Commission Report

The Long-term care Commission released its final report late last Friday, and the findings paint a picture of years of neglect, followed by devastating choices by the Ford government to cancel inspections, deny staff paid sick days, leave facilities brutally understaffed, forego infection prevention, and control, and allow the COVID-19 virus to spread quickly while the government acted slowly. It also calls the privatized, for-profit model into question. You can read the report here.

New Democrats are calling on the government to act with urgency to implement the report's recommendations, and have put forward a comprehensive plan to make the entire home care and long-term care home system public and not-for-profit.

Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath has also written to OPP Commissioner Thomas Carrique asking the Ontario Provincial Police to evaluate whether a criminal investigation is warranted into disturbing reports of senior deaths due to dehydration and neglect in long-term care.

Horwath also took the Ford government to task this week for rewarding for-profit long-term care companies that left residents to live, and die, in horrifying conditions. New revelations show the for-profit companies paid out big bonuses to executives for 2020, while the Ford government gave an Extendicare vice-president a cushy appointment.

Our bill for safe drinking water for all Ontarians passes second reading

Despite being the most water-rich nation in the world, both federal and provincial governments have failed to guarantee access to clean water for Indigenous peoples for generations.

No family should have to live with bathwater so contaminated that it could make their little ones sick, or tap water that isn't safe enough to use to make dinner.

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NDP MP Iqbal Mahood's bill, the Indigenous Right to Safe Drinking Water Act, calls on the provincial government to include First Nations living and working on reserves in a law that ensures all Ontarians have access to safe drinking water.

The bill passed second reading today, and will now go to committee. We will continue to advocate for all Indigenous First Nations to have access to clean drinking water, just like the rest of Ontario.

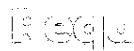
I co-sponsor bill declaring May 10 an Anti-Asian Racism Day of Action

Anti-Asian racism is unfortunately on the rise in Canada, including right here in University Rosedale. During the COVID-19 pandemic, over 1,150 incidents of anti-Asian racism were reported across the country and 40 percent of these racist attacks happened here in Ontario.

In response to these disturbing trends, I and my colleagues tabled a bill to make May 10 an annual provincial Day of Action on Anti-Asian Racism. Today, Doug Ford's Conservative MPPs prevented its immediate passage — but the NDP won't give up.

In addition to declaring May 10 a Day of Action on Anti-Asian Racism, the NDP is urging Doug Ford to immediately:

- Implement a province-wide anti-racism strategy that specifically addresses the rise in anti-Asian hate and works to dismantle organized hate groups and systemic discrimination.
- Establish a fully-funded, independent, and empowered Anti-Racism Secretariat to take the lead on this critical work.
- Mandate race-based data collection across all provincial ministries.
- Create a real COVID-19 equity plan that ensures the hardest-hit communities – including Asian communities, elders, women, small businesses, and essential workers – get the respect and direct financial support they deserve to recover from the pandemic.



My new bill will make companies disclose climate change risk

Last week, I announced my new bill with MPP Ian Arthur that, If passed, will require businesses to publicly disclose how they may be impacted by various climate change risk scenarios, and outline measures to curb the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events, carbon pricing, exposure to legal liability, new or changing technology and global political instability.

Climate change is an immediate and grave threat to the health of humanity, our economy, and Ontario businesses. In 2017, the Ontario Securities Commission issued a report concluding that climate disclosure won't improve unless issuers are compelled to report, but no changes have been made in the province since. Requiring businesses to disclose the impact of climate change risk on their business will help governments, investors, businesses and the wider economy understand and respond to the climate crisis. Stay tuned for more details on how to support my new bill.



Seniors should not have to worry about unfair evictions

In 2019, over 100 seniors were evicted from Davenhill Senior Living at Yonge and Bloor. The work we did with these residents showed us that laws protecting seniors in retirement homes need to be strengthened.

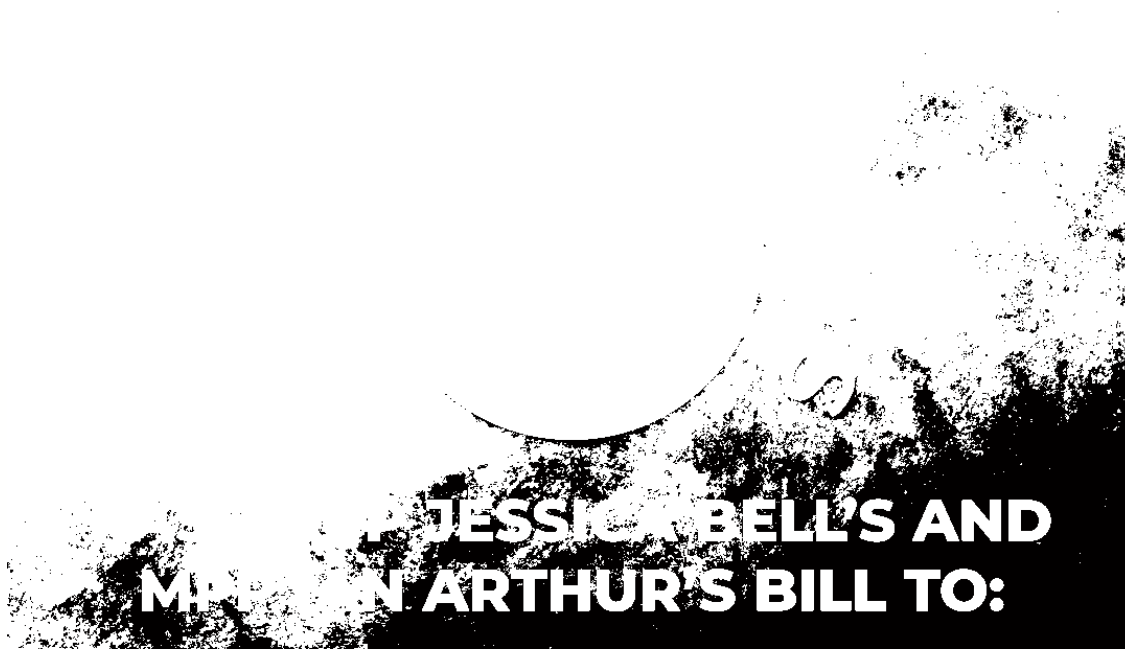
Seniors deserve the same rights as any other tenant and should be entitled to compensation if they are evicted. They should also be protected from economic eviction caused by unfair price gouging, which happens when retirement homes dramatically increase the cost of providing basic services like meals well above the actual cost of providing it.

That's why I introduced Bill 280, Protecting Seniors in Retirement Homes, which aims to make changes to the Residential Tenancies Act to provide more rent control protections for residents in care homes, restrict retirement home providers from imposing unlimited fee hikes for services on vulnerable seniors, and give senior residents three months' rent compensation if they are evicted.

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[Click here to add your name in support.](#)

Please contact our office at jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca if you are interested in doing outreach and working with us to get this bill passed.



It's time to stop microplastics from entering Ontario waters

Microplastics in the Great Lakes is an increasing concern for the health of our waters, the creatures that live there, and the 14.5 million Ontarians who rely on them for their drinking water.

The most common type of microplastic, microfibers, shed from our clothes into washing machines, which release, per load, anywhere from hundreds to

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birds and mammals.

To help stop microplastics from leaching into our ecosystems, I introduced [Bill 279](#) with my colleague NDP MPP Ian Arthur, requiring manufacturers to equip washing machines with a microfilter, which studies show, reduces 87% of microfibers from ending in washing machine wastewater.

This innovative technology was developed by [researchers right here](#) at the University of Toronto in our riding and was piloted by the good people of Parry Sound. Lisa Erdle, from the University of Toronto, and David Sweetman from Georgian Bay Forever, joined us at our press conference.

We can and must address microplastic pollution now. For our plant, for ourselves and for future generations to come.

[Click here to help stop microplastics from entering our waterways.](#)

[Click here to learn more.](#)

BECOME A VISION ZERO YOUTH NETWORK AMBASSADOR!
RECEIVE A TRIP TO TORONTO, \$500 SCHOLARSHIP, 40 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT HOURS, AND MORE!



Become a vision zero youth network ambassador

The award-winning [Teens Learn to Drive](#) (TL2D) Team is recruiting Ontario high school students for the 2021-22 school year to become Vision Zero Youth Network (VZYN) Ambassadors. If you have teens, nieces, nephews or friends that might be interested, please share this information.

The VZYN program is free and has lots of benefits for selected students and their schools. Ambassadors will work with the TL2D Team, police and other partners to close the knowledge gap for young drivers, riders and pedestrians and make Ontario roads safer. The time commitment required is 5 hours per month.

Why This is Important

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been aware of the current best practices, vehicle safety features or road designs.

They also missed out on 20 hours of classroom training that covers critical information about how to:

- Drive on various types of roads & in various weather conditions
- drive around big trucks & emergency vehicles
- maintain a vehicle and ensure it's road-worthy
- deal with emergencies.

ROUND 1 Applications CLOSE June 1, 2021.

Please share this video with high school students: <https://youtu.be/ktjC9onfTss>

Please share this video with parents, high school administrators and teachers: <https://youtu.be/Ai60JqpooDI>



New pollinator garden project in University-Rosedale needs your help!

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Please send your ideas to garnetaveflowers@gmail.com, by June 3, 2021. In your email, please include your full name and any other information (such as age, favourite plants, pollinators or birds) that you wish. For any drawings or designs, please include initials or first name only.

Drawings, designs are also welcome, please send them by May 13!

Thanks to Jonny Dushman's inspiration and the support of Toronto City Councillor Mike Layton's office (Ward 11, University-Rosedale), the city has granted permission for this large strip of land to be transformed into what could be a beautiful greenspace! The site is located on city property, on the south side of Garnet Avenue, next to Christie Street (adjacent to the Fiesta Farms shipping lot). It has a mixture of partial shade and full sun. Currently, there is a fence, with vines and some poorly maintained grass and daylilies.

For now, this space is known as "Garnet Flowers." In addition to a name, this garden project also needs:

- native plants (seedlings / divisions / or seed mixes)
- good soil or compost material
- helping hands for soil preparation, planting, sourcing logs (for a border) as well as rocks
- signs – for the garden's name and for the native plants

COVID-19 Vaccination Town Hall for Toronto Residents

Toronto Public Health invites people who live, work or study in Toronto to a Town Hall about COVID-19 vaccines. Dr. Vinita Dubey, Associate Medical Officer of Health, will answer your questions about:

- COVID-19 vaccines available in Canada
- Vaccine safety and benefits
- How to get vaccinated and who is eligible
- Ways to reduce COVID-19 spread

There are three sessions to choose from:

Wednesday, May 12, 2021	Thursday, May 13, 2021	Saturday, May 15, 2021
6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.	11 a.m. to 12 p.m.	1 p.m. to 2 p.m.
Join online	Join online	Join online
Or join by telephone:	Or join by telephone:	Or join by telephone:

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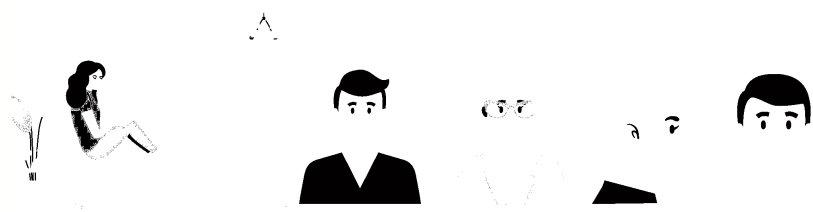
I hope you will be able to share these with any family members who have questions, or concerns so we can help them understand how these vaccines are safe, and protect them and their families.

Latest COVID-19 vaccine information

- As of Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at 8:00 a.m., individuals with at-risk health conditions such as dementia, diabetes, and sickle cell disease, as well as Group Two of people who cannot work from home including grocery store, construction, restaurant, and transportation workers will be eligible to book an appointment to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at ontario.ca/book-vaccine.
- In addition, effective Thursday, May 13, 2021, at 8:00 a.m., individuals turning 40 and over in 2021 in non-hot spot communities will also be eligible to book an appointment to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at a mass immunization clinic. Eligible individuals can schedule an appointment through the provincial booking system. This builds upon the eligibility of those aged 18 and over in hot spot areas and is aligned with the rollout announced on May 2, 2021.
- On Friday, the province has expanded the use of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to pharmacies in hot spot areas, that an expected expansion to occur when more of those vaccines become available.
- In addition, due to increased vaccine supply, the province is adding high-risk health care workers, dialysis patients, and all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis individuals to the list of those eligible to book their appointment to receive a second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine earlier than the extended four-month interval.
- Official Opposition NDP Leader Andrea Horwath is calling on the Ford government to put forward an aggressive plan to quickly get Ontario patients the surgeries and diagnostic procedures that have been delayed – and to fund that plan, now. [Read more.](#)

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We all have a role to play to help reduce COVID-19 spread & keep our city safe:



TORONTO.CA/COVID19



 **Toronto** Public Health

Now is the time to follow public health guidelines

As COVID-19 cases climb in Ontario, please consider these reminders from Toronto Public Health to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed:

- Limit non-essential trips out of your home and follow [travel advice](#)
- Keep [two metres \(six feet\) distance](#) from others
- [Wear a mask or face covering](#) in indoor public spaces and when you can't keep physical distance
- Clean your hands often. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based (70-90 per cent) hand sanitizer
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell

Download the [COVID Alert app](#) so you can be notified directly if you have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19. I have downloaded the app and I encourage you to do the same.

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**Protect your
community.
Download the
COVID Alert app.**



Health Canada Santé Canada

Canada

Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus

As always, if you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at jbell-co@ndp.on.ca



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