

Dear Cottage Association President:

As cases of COVID-19 continue to arise in Simcoe and Muskoka and elsewhere in the province, I ask your assistance in supporting and sharing the Ontario government's and Chief Medical Officer of Health's message (most recently communicated in correspondence to Medical Officers of Health on May 1, 2020) to stay safe and stay home at your primary residence. I know that normally at this time of year many people begin spending time at their cottages, enjoying the natural beauty of Ontario's lake-lands. However this is a year like no other, in which we have all been managing pandemic COVID-19, which is still circulating in our communities, particularly in larger urban centres.

With the arrival of the seasonal residents to Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka we would also expect to see the potential for COVID-19 to affect more people in our rural and small urban areas. It is also important to know that health care services, though not strained at this time, could become overwhelmed with the arrival of many people to cottages who may be incubating the virus as they arrive. Having a case of COVID-19 begin in a more remote location would make it more difficult for people to obtain the timely medical care that they would need.

For these reasons I ask that you inform your association members of my concerns by sharing this message with them and ask that they postpone going to their cottages, even for a day trip, until a later time when the leadership within the public health system communicates that the rate of COVID-19 transmission is truly under control and sufficiently low to not pose these hazards.

I am aware that despite my message to stay home, there will still be some people who will make the decision to go to their cottage. If that is what they choose to do despite the request to not do so, they need to ensure that they follow public health measures, including: physical distancing of at least 2 metres from other people; staying at their cottage as much as possible; purchasing food and medications in their own community before arriving at their cottage and limiting their visits to the local community for essential shopping only; no gatherings of more than five people unless they are all from the same household; practicing proper hand washing and cough hygiene, including frequent handwashing; and self-isolating if they develop symptoms.

For more information on COVID-19 please view the information that we have provided on our website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.com, contact us on our Health Connection Line at 1-877-721-7520 or by [email](#), or follow us on Twitter or Facebook.

Please be safe and be well this spring and summer.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

t: 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 x: 7219

e: Charles.Gardner@smdhu.org

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, 15 Sperling Dr, Barrie ON L4M 6K9

