

MEDIA RELEASE

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HAVE YOUR SAY

- Health Unit Launches New Survey Asking Area Residents How COVID-19 is Affecting Them -

Is COVID-19 affecting you? How is it impacting you and your family's physical, emotional, and mental well-being? Do you practise physical distancing and wear a mask? Do you agree with these preventive measures?

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit is asking these and many more questions in a newly launched COVID-19 survey (available at www.hkpr.on.ca/covid-19/) that runs from now until early December 2020. The confidential, anonymous survey is open to anyone 18 years of age and older who lives in Haliburton County, Northumberland County, and the City of Kawartha Lakes.

"We know COVID-19 is having an impact on people in the tri-county area, but how much of an impact, where, and who is being particularly affected is harder to gauge," says Andrew Harris, an Epidemiologist with the HKPR District Health Unit. "This survey is designed to paint a clearer picture of how COVID-19 is affecting our communities so that the Health Unit can be better informed and able to more effectively respond to pandemic challenges and concerns."

The survey takes approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and must be done in one session. The survey asks people about COVID-19 and its impact on them (mental health, stress, economic disruption, etc.). Questions also ask about people's personal protective behaviours (mask use, hand hygiene, etc.) during the pandemic and overall attitudes (seriousness of COVID-19, how well public health is responding) towards it.

"We encourage everyone, whether young adult or older adults, urban or rural, single or parents with children, to complete the survey," adds Fiona Kelly, Chief Nursing Officer and Director of Foundational Services with the HKPR District Health Unit. "This type of local data gathering is essential to develop evidence-based programs and services that can assist the Health Unit and other organizations respond effectively to the current and lasting effects of COVID-19 on our community."

Gathering information through public surveys is not new for the Health Unit. For almost two decades, the Health Unit has been participating in the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance (RRFSS) survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at York University on behalf of the local Health Unit. HKPR uses the local RRFSS results to plan programs and improve its services.

The COVID-19 online survey is part of RRFSS, which normally runs as a monthly phone survey in which local residents are asked information about their health behaviours, knowledge and attitudes. Due to COVID-19, RRFSS had been on hold since March.

For media inquiries, contact:

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