

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Region's COVID-19 vaccine coverage rates updated

Statistics Canada has released its new population estimates for public health units in Ontario. The previous estimates available were based on the 2011 Census and were significantly higher than the most recent census data. This means the region's COVID-19 vaccine coverage rates have been underestimated up until now.

“According to the new Statistics Canada estimates, our population has 6,492 fewer people than the estimate that was previously provided. When we use the new population estimate, our COVID-19 vaccine coverage rates increase,” says Dorian Lunny, Epidemiologist at NWHU.

Dr. Kit Young Hoon, Medical Officer of Health at NWHU is pleased with the updated statistics but notes that public health officials are using the new statistics with caution. “We must take into consideration that some households in our area may not have completed the census earlier this year, which would cause our population estimate to be lower than it is. We do however believe the new rates to be accurate within 2-3 percent, which is still very impressive,” explains Dr. Young Hoon.

Even with the high vaccination rate, Dr. Young Hoon notes that there is still risk of infection in the region, particularly in the unvaccinated. “Although unvaccinated people make up a very small proportion of the entire population, the majority of people dying from COVID-19 and being admitted to ICU due to the virus have not been vaccinated. Getting two doses of the vaccine and a booster dose when eligible significantly reduces the chance of severe illness and death if exposed to COVID-19,” says Dr. Young Hoon.

Information on the vaccination rates for the region can be found at www.nwhu.on.ca/covid19.

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The health unit continues to vaccinate anyone eligible for a first, second, or booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. For more information or to book an appointment, visit www.nwhu.on.ca/covid19.

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