TORONTO
Public Health

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Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
March 16, 2020 at 3:45 p.m.
Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W.

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- Good afternoon and welcome everyone. I'm here to provide you with an update on COVID-19 plans and my new recommendations

- We have recently seen a significant increase in cases of COVID-19, some of which are unlinked, and thus indicate community transmission. We continue to pursue rigorous investigations of these cases and their contacts.
--Last week I made a number of recommendations on public health measures to protect our city.
--At this time I am urging you to take further action.

- I recognize that these recommendations will result in significant adjustments to our daily lives, and they will present challenges.

- Please know that I do not make these recommendations lightly. On the contrary, they are being made after careful and measured consideration. Today I recommend:
--Bars and restaurants to stop in-person service and move exclusively to take-out and delivery service as soon as possible and no later than midnight tonight.
--In order to limit virus spread, I am also strongly recommending all nightclubs, movie theatres, and concert venues close as soon as possible.
--Businesses who choose to defy my recommendations may be subject to orders under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

- Also, I am recommending:
--If you can stay home, do.
--If you are a business or employer, help your staff to stay home.
--Limit group gatherings.
--If you need to seek medical attention, call ahead.
--If you are a healthcare worker and are sick, stay home.
--If you have travelled, stay home for 14 days from the day you arrived home.

--If neighbours or family members need supplies, then help them, but practice social distancing.

--If you need to take public transit to access health or necessary goods or services, practice social distancing.

- I am calling on our city to rise to this challenge to reduce the spread of this virus. We know that these measures I'm recommending today work, based on the experience of other jurisdictions.

- I am asking for everyone in our city to take these recommendations seriously and make every possible effort to practice social distancing.

- I cannot over emphasize how important this is, particularly at this critical time. Again, this is not a decision I make lightly – our hospitality industry contributes significantly to the life of our city... we are taking this action today to protect the health of our city.

- I have been asked why I do not issue blanket closures today. It is the job of public health to balance measures meant to control the spread of COVID-19 with the economic consequences of those measures, with the overall goal of protecting the health of our city.

- I know our Mayor and City Manager have this front of mind and have convened the Mayor's Economic Support and Recovery Task Force.

- We in public health, along with our residents, all have a role to play in doing our part to prevent further spread of COVID-19. This is why I need each and every one of you to do your part for the well-being of our city.

- Every opportunity to avoid interactions with others helps to prevent the spread of this disease. Every interaction avoided helps to flatten the curve. If you can, stay home, help out our city by reducing your interaction with others. Every little bit, every effort counts.

- In closing, I would like to sincerely thank my City colleagues and the entire Toronto Public Service, in particular my team at Toronto Public Health. Your

city is still working. Many people are working around the clock. We love this city too.

- I'd also like to thank the media and the people of Toronto for your willingness to help out, whether it's by sharing accurate information, or by staying home. These decisions are not easy. We will get through this, we do need your help. I would now be pleased to answer your questions.

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