



TOM MRAKAS
MAYOR

**For Immediate Release
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GTHA MAYORS AND CHAIRS URGE RESIDENTS TO BE CAUTIOUS AS OMICRON CASES CONTINUE TO RISE

"Today, Mayors and Chairs from the 11 largest municipal governments across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area held an emergency meeting to discuss the ongoing response to COVID-19 and the Omicron variant across the region.

The Mayors and Chairs are committed to working with each other along with the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada to continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, to save lives and keep people safe.

All GTHA municipalities are adjusting operations and services in response to the Omicron variant and the need to ramp up the delivery of third dose booster vaccinations as soon as possible with staffing being a central challenge.

To assist with the expansion of vaccination capacity the Mayors and Chairs look forward to working with the provincial government to incentivize more pharmacies and doctors to offer vaccinations and to mount a province-wide campaign to recruit retired health care workers to join local vaccination teams.

Given the real threat posed by the Omicron variant, the Mayors and Chairs are requesting the other governments to immediately consider the reinstatement of pandemic pay for paramedics, public health nurses along with redeployed employees working in long term care homes and emergency and temporary shelters. This previous temporary measure, which was in effect for a period of time in 2020, has once again become a priority vital to the continued provision of these services in the coming months as we continue to ask more and more of our frontline workers.

The Mayors and Chairs also expressed the hope that priority can be given to many of those same frontline workers when distributing rapid antigen test kits given their greater exposure and their inability to work from home.

The Mayors and Chairs from across the GTHA urge all residents to continue to follow the public health advice through the holiday season. Please be safe and cautious. Please continue to wear a mask in public places. And please if you are eligible, make arrangements to get your booster vaccine dose.

By getting vaccinated and following public health measures, including responsible holiday celebration, together we will blunt the impact of Omicron, keep more people healthy and be able to get back to a more normal life including the ever important task of generating a strong economic recovery."

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AURORA TOWN HALL