

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



October 15, 2020

Dear Faith Community Leaders,

Thank you for your continued efforts in helping Canada reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Your work is important to our communities, and I would like to offer my sincere thanks for your promotion of public health measures to your membership during this time.

Now, when there is an upward trend in COVID-19 cases in Canada, the rise in case numbers in several regions is cause for concern. Faith leaders play a critical role in guiding their communities during this time. As I am encouraging all Canadians to adapt their settings and activities to limit the spread of COVID-19 in the months ahead, I want to reach out to you to ask for your help.

I reach out to you today because a number of reported outbreaks have been linked to gatherings such as weddings, funerals, and other religious and community gatherings. Additionally, the weather, annual holidays, and other activities that bring people indoors this time of year can increase the risk of the virus spreading further.

I would like to remind you about the Public Health Agency of Canada's [risk mitigation tool for gatherings and events](#), which I shared in July to assist individuals, groups, and organizations in considering risks related to planning, organizing and hosting gatherings or events during the COVID-19 pandemic. The tool also provides examples of measures that can mitigate potential risks of the spread of COVID-19. I will also add that although provincial, territorial and local public health authorities set maximum allowances for number of people at gatherings, you should consider setting lower allowances depending on the level of transmission in your community, the type of gathering and specific setting.

Colder weather and more time spent indoors can also cause feelings of sadness, stress, confusion and worry. You and your organizations will continue to be critical in providing the mental health support your communities need. The website Canada.ca/coronavirus also has a wide range of immediate mental health resources and supports for Canadians, including the [Wellness Together Canada portal](#).

Thank you again on your efforts to date in helping Canada reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. For additional information on Canada's response to COVID-19, including awareness resources and guidance documents, please visit Canada.ca/coronavirus.

Regards,

Dr. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada



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