



TOM MRAKAS
MAYOR

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GTHA Mayors and Chairs focused on boosting vaccination rates

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

The Mayors and Chairs remain absolutely committed to continuing to work with each other along with the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, to save lives and keep people safe.

GTHA municipalities have been focused on rolling out COVID-19 vaccinations for more than a year and have made good progress delivering first, second, and now third doses. The effort to make sure all eligible residents have access to third doses is continuing across the GTHA. At the same time, we are working to help kids and education workers get vaccinated to support the province and school boards to safely return to in-person learning on January 17. We share the view that in-class learning will be beneficial to all concerned including especially the students and will do everything we can as cities and regions, including special vaccination efforts for our school communities, to allow the province and school boards to reopen the schools on January 17.

We strongly reiterate the view expressed previously that the province, perhaps in partnership with the federal government, should reinstate a form of pandemic pay. This was just successfully done in 2020 during another intense period of the pandemic and for some sectors such as long term care and healthcare workers including paramedics, the extraordinary challenges we are facing again today would more than justify such a measure. We also discussed the desirability of looking at the prioritization of the healthcare, education and other frontline workers in the distribution of rapid tests.

The Mayors and Chairs continue to express their gratitude to all front line workers who continue to serve residents in an exemplary fashion even in the face of extraordinary challenges.

We continue to urge all residents across the GTHA to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Along with the vaccination efforts, all GTHA municipalities are also working non-stop to protect essential and critical services that are being stressed by Omicron with increasing staff absences due to COVID-19 illness and isolation requirements. In comparing our experiences in this area the Mayors and Chairs expressed a wish to see the province work with the hospitals and with us to address some of the issues which have arisen affecting EMS services."

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AURORA TOWN HALL