Beat: Health

Phase 5 of Nova Scotia Reopening Plan

Pushed Ahead To October 4th, 2021

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USPA NEWS - At today's COVID-19 briefing Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Michelle Thompson, Minister of Health and Wellness, announced that Nova Scotia will not enter Phase 5 tomorrow, September 15th as planned. It is now scheduled to start on October 4th, which is the date the province's proof of full vaccination policy will take effect.
This news follows 73 new COVID-19 cases being announced between last Friday and Monday along with 66 cases being announced for today. This brings the total number of COVID-19 cases to 173 with 4 cases requiring hospitalization.

Health and Wellness Minister, Michelle Thompson, started off by saying, "The Premier and I are very troubled by this. To say the least, this is not where we want our epidemiology as we're set to go into Phase 5. Staying in Phase 4 is necessary until we have the added protection of the proof of vaccine policy that will allow larger groups of people to gather more safely."

Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Robert Strang explained that entering Phase 5 has always required the full vaccination of a minimum 75 per cent of the overall population and good epidemiology. As of today 72.7 per cent of Nova Scotians now have both shots.

He said, "I know this is not welcome news, especially for businesses that have been waiting for us to reopen, and I know many people are tired of wearing masks and being restricted by gathering limits, but unfortunately this pandemic is not done with us yet. Given where things are here, as well as in New Brunswick and P.E.I., I am not comfortable moving into Phase 5 just yet. It is far better to wait until we are ready to implement our proof of vaccination policy."

In his remarks today, Dr Strang continued to explain that the proof of vaccination policy details are still in the early stages of development, but did give a comprehensive list of those businesses and organizations that will be required to verify vaccination status of patrons.

It will apply to: Full-service restaurants where patrons sit at tables to be served, both indoors and on patios. Liquor licensed establishments, casinos and other gaming establishments, both indoors and on patios. Indoor and outdoor fitness and recreation facilities such as gyms, yoga studios, pools and arenas, as well as fitness classes. Indoor and outdoor leisure facilities and businesses such as dance and music lessons, climbing facilities, escape rooms, pottery painting, indoor play places, arcades, shooting ranges, go-carts and outdoor adventure. Indoor and outdoor festivals, special events, and arts and culture events and venues such as theatre performances, concerts and movie theatres, unless they are outdoor events held in public spaces with no specific entry point. Participants and spectators for indoor and outdoor sports practices, games, competitions and tournaments. Indoor and outdoor extracurricular school-based activities, including sports. Bus, boat and walking tours. Museums, public libraries and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia. Indoor and outdoor events and activities such as receptions, social events, conferences and training that are hosted by a recognized business or organization. Indoor and outdoor wedding and funeral ceremonies, receptions and visitation that are hosted by a recognized business or organization.
Proof of vaccination WILL NOT be required under the province wide policy for employees of businesses and organizations that offer the above mentioned events and activities.

Proof of vaccination will not be required for most places that don't facilitate formal gatherings, such as: retail stores, financial institutions, food establishments that primarily offer fast food, takeout and delivery. Professional services such as accountants and lawyers, personal services such as hair salons, barber shops, spas and body art. Health-care services and health professions such as doctors' offices, dental care, massage therapy and physiotherapy. Rental accommodations such as hotel rooms, cottages and campgrounds. Faith services, school-based activities that take place during the school day, before and after school programs and

school buses. Business meetings and other activities where the general public is not present. Places where government services are offered, food banks, shelters, Family Resource Centres and adult day programs for seniors or people with disabilities, and informal gatherings at a private residence.

Nova Scotia Premier, Tim Houston at a previous COVID-19 briefing said, “We must maintain the cautious approach that has kept Nova Scotia safe and part of that cautious approach will be a proof of vaccine policy.”

Most people agree with the cautious approach even if that means delaying moving into Phase 5 and maintaining the current gatherings limits, masking and social distancing protocols.
Dr. Strang closed by saying that updates on the proof of vaccination policy will be communicated to Nova Scotians when all the details are finalized.

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