COVID-19 in PEI: Moving Forward
Planning for Public Health Measures Summer/Fall 2021
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous impact on the lives of Islanders. However, with vaccination coverage rates rising in PEI and across the country there are optimistic signs that public health measures may soon be lifted in a cautious and measured way over the next few months.

PEI continues to be in a state of public health emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many provinces are experiencing a serious third wave linked to the presence of COVID-19 variants of concern that are more contagious and result in more severe illness and hospitalizations. We continue to learn more about the effectiveness of the approved vaccines against the variants of concern.

To date, PEI has the lowest rate of COVID-19 cases in Canada and has not had any deaths related to the virus. PEI has maintained strong border controls and, since emerging from the initial lockdown in March – May 2020, many activities including schools, sports, worship services, and personal gatherings with close friends and family have continued with few limitations and interruptions.

Our successes have been the result of the dedication and hard work of Island residents, businesses, and organizations in following public health guidance. Despite the success of PEI’s pandemic measures, COVID-19 has been difficult for all Island residents. The health, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19 will continue to be balanced against the measures needed to address the pandemic. The primary goals of the pandemic response in PEI continue to be:
- To minimize serious illness and mortality, and
- To reduce societal disruption.

The availability of safe, effective vaccines gives us hope and provides an additional layer of protection. By the end of June, there is capacity for 80% of eligible Island residents over the age of 12 years to be immunized with one dose and by fall, to be fully immunized with two doses. There will be enough vaccine for everyone who is eligible and who wants to be immunized.

As more Island residents are fully immunized, we will transition from the current public health state of emergency to easing restrictions, and finally to living with COVID-19 sustainably over the long-term. COVID-19 in PEI: Moving Forward – Summer and Fall 2021 is a five-step plan for easing public health measures. It represents a stepwise approach to easing travel public health measures based on the best available evidence and ongoing risk assessment. Both PEI’s travel measures, including isolation, and PEI public health measures (through the “New Normal” of the Alert Level system) will be progressively eased. While these steps may provide a basis for planning, they are subject to change. Decisions about moving between steps will be confirmed at least five days before each proposed date. Each step will be guided by monitoring and surveillance criteria such as achievement of PEI vaccination targets and controlled transmission of COVID-19 both in PEI and nationally (see Appendix A). The availability of testing, public health capacity and health care system capacity remain essential throughout the steps. Planning assumptions will be updated as more national and international evidence becomes available (see Appendix B).

The Moving Forward plan is based on several principles. First, vaccine status of Island residents and visitors will be critical to ensuring safe easing of measures. Steps in the plan have been designed to allow time for as many Island residents to be
immunized as possible. Second, COVID-19 testing for travelers at the point of entry will support early detection of infection and limit transmission of the virus. Third, self-isolation for travelers arriving to PEI will continue to play a role although self-isolation requirements will gradually be reduced. Lastly, general public health measures such as physical distancing and masking will continue to provide a solid foundation for the Moving Forward plan with the potential for easing these measures later in the fall.

The following are highlights of the five steps of the Moving Forward plan. Estimated start dates are as follows and further detail for each step can be found in the following table.

- **Step 1 (June 6, 2021)** – Initial easing of PEI public health measures. No change to travel measures.

- **Step 2 (June 27, 2021)** – Travel permitted from Atlantic Canada with no self-isolation for travelers with at least one dose of vaccine and shortened self-isolation for unvaccinated travelers.

- **Step 3 (July 18, 2021)** – Further easing of PEI public health measures to allow for larger gatherings.

- **Step 4 (August 8, 2021)** – Travel permitted from outside Atlantic Canada with no self-isolation for fully-vaccinated travelers and shortened self-isolation for unvaccinated or partially vaccinated travelers (with pre travel approval under existing travel streams for non-PEI residents)

- **Step 5 (September 12, 2021)** – Limited PEI public health measures including no personal or organized gathering limits. No pre-travel approval for domestic travelers. Some isolation and testing measures for unvaccinated and partially vaccinated travelers.

Residents of PEI have demonstrated their commitment to public health measures since the pandemic began 15 months ago. Islanders have adapted quickly when asked and have made sacrifices to keep themselves and others safe. The measures contained in Moving Forward are possible, in large part, due to the steadfast support, patience and cooperation of individual Islanders, businesses, organizations, municipalities, and communities.
May 2021 Projections: Moving Forward

These steps are a basis for planning and are subject to change. Decisions about moving between steps will be guided by monitoring and surveillance criteria, as well as by balancing societal disruption with transmission risk.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors</td>
<td>Incr. levels of vaccination among PEI residents</td>
<td>First of two doses of vaccine received by 80% of PEI residents age 12 and older</td>
<td>Incr. levels of vaccination among PEI residents</td>
<td>Second of two doses of vaccine received by 80% of all long-term care and community care residents, health care workers in direct patient contact, Indigenous communities, and PEI residents age 80 and older</td>
<td>Second of two doses of vaccine received by 80% of PEI residents age 12 and older</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEI Public Health Measures</td>
<td>Public health measures will continue throughout the summer, including physical distancing, records for contact tracing, enhanced cleaning and disinfection, promotion of and access to hand washing and hand sanitizing, access to testing and case management</td>
<td>Some easing of non-medical mask requirements (beginning July 18)</td>
<td>Some public health measures will continue for certain sectors and activities</td>
<td>Easing of physical distancing measures</td>
<td>Further easing of non-medical mask requirements</td>
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<td>Family and Friends</td>
<td>Personal gatherings up to 20 people</td>
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<td>Organized Gatherings</td>
<td>Recognized businesses and organizations can have organized gatherings, including on personal property, with an operational plan of up to 50 people; additional multiples of 50 permitted with a prior approval of the operational plan (up to 200 total); facilities who are able to demonstrate separate entrances/exits/bathrooms for additional cohorts will be considered on an individual basis</td>
<td>Individuals (i.e. not a recognized business or organization) can host up to 50 people (including on personal property), with physical distancing between households/groups of close contacts for special occasions (e.g. backyard wedding) with a reviewed operational plan; no additional cohorts permitted</td>
<td>Organized gatherings up to 200 people outdoors or 100 people indoors, with physical distancing between households/groups of close contacts; must be hosted by recognized business or organization</td>
<td>Multiple gatherings with a pre-approved operational plan, organized in cohorts of 200 (outdoors) or 100 (indoors)</td>
<td>No organized gathering limits</td>
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COVID-19 IN PEI: MOVING FORWARD
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<td>PEI Public Health Measures continued</td>
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<td>Sport and Recreation</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Participants in activities and/or organized gatherings that require close contact (e.g. sports, performance, etc.) are limited to a single cohort of 100 per day</td>
<td>No restrictions</td>
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<td>Business and NGOs</td>
<td>Table size at restaurants increases to 20, with physical distancing between tables</td>
<td>No restrictions</td>
<td>No more restricted closing time for in-person consumption of food and beverage at food premises and licensed facilities</td>
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<td>Education and Child Care</td>
<td>Full-time classroom learning in K-12, with cohorts</td>
<td>Full-time classroom learning in K-12, with the possibility of targeted cohorting based on vaccination</td>
<td>- Online and/or classroom learning (with physical distancing) in post-secondary</td>
<td>Full-time classroom learning in post-secondary, possibly based on vaccination, with online learning options</td>
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<td>- Licensed and unlicensed child care centres at 100% capacity</td>
<td>- Licensed and unlicensed child care centres at 100% capacity</td>
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<td>- Licensed and unlicensed child care centres at 100% capacity</td>
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<td>Long-term Care</td>
<td>Enhanced visitation permitted if vaccination threshold is reached</td>
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<td>Unrestricted visitation if vaccination threshold is maintained</td>
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<td>- Fully vaccinated staff may work at more than one facility</td>
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<td>Travel-Related Public Health Measures</td>
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<td>Travel Guidance</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>- Non-essential travel outside of the Atlantic provinces is not recommended</td>
<td>Consider travel risks carefully and avoid travel to areas with a high incidence of COVID-19</td>
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<td>Pre-Travel Approval and Travel Streams</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>- Travel to regions of Atlantic provinces in red zones or with outbreaks should be avoided</td>
<td>No pre-travel approval or travel streams for visitors from Canadian provinces and territories</td>
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<td>Travel-Related Isolation and Testing (including PEI residents)</td>
<td>Current</td>
<td>- Visitors from Atlantic provinces with no travel streams, and with a self-declaration form required, including vaccination status (and where applicable, record of vaccination), for permanent residents of NB, NS and NL</td>
<td>- Some isolation and testing measures recommended for unvaccinated and partially-vaccinated travellers</td>
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<td>- Visitors from outside of NB, NS, and NL must receive pre-travel approval under an eligible travel stream</td>
<td>International travel dependent on federal measures</td>
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<td>- No self-isolation for fully or partially vaccinated travellers who have been in the Atlantic provinces for at least 14 days, with testing</td>
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<td>- Shortened self-isolation for all travellers from outside of the Atlantic provinces, and unvaccinated travellers from inside the Atlantic provinces, with testing</td>
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<td>- Testing at points of entry</td>
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<td>- International travel dependent on federal measures</td>
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<td>Border Screening</td>
<td>Border screening in place</td>
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<td>No border screening</td>
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Appendix A: Monitoring and Surveillance

The following set of core criteria are used to guide public health decision making. Multiple indicators under each criteria are routinely monitored to inform risk levels. Core criteria are considered in combination, and along with other factors. No single indicator will be used to determine our risk level and subsequent public health response.

**COVID-19 immunization program**
- Percent of the eligible population fully immunized against COVID-19

**Variants of concern and of interest**

**COVID-19 transmission**
- Incidence of new cases in the past 7 days
- Incidence of new unlinked (i.e., no known source) cases in the past 7 days
- Number of COVID-19 hospitalizations in the past 7 days
- Weekly incidence of new cases per 100,000 population in Canada
- Weekly incidence of new cases per 100,000 population in Atlantic Canada

**Public health capacity**
- Percent of cases reached within 24 hours of positive test result
- Percent of contacts reached within 48 hours of positive test result
- Time from testing to reporting of positive test result
- Routine lab-testing capacity (available # tests per week) & testing volume (actual # tests conducted per week)
- Point-of-care testing capacity (available # tests per week) & testing volume (actual # tests conducted per week)
- Supports (i.e., housing) for self-isolation are available when a need is identified
- # individuals in isolation

**Health care system capacity**
- Critical care capacity
- Sufficient capacity in reserve to double current COVID-19 ICU caseload
- Number of weeks’ supply of certain PPE items (e.g., masks, gloves, gowns)

**Outbreak risk in vulnerable settings is minimized**
- Number of new and ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks in a workplace, congregate living or institutional setting

**Until we reach 80% of eligible PEI population fully vaccinated, risks of imported cases are managed**
- Travel into PEI is restricted
- Pre-travel approval, work isolation approval, and rotational worker approval in place
- Traveler screening and testing in place at points of entry into PEI
- Self-isolation requirements in place
- Supports (i.e., housing) for self-isolation are available when a need is identified
- Incidence of new travel-related cases in the past 7 days

**Communities are fully engaged**
- # visits to website
- # press briefings / media appearances
- # of Operational Plans submitted
- # of COVID-19 complaints
Appendix B: Planning Assumptions

A number of assumptions were used to help support planning; more evidence will be available in the coming months to help inform decision-making. Assumptions at this point include:

i. Vaccines are effective in preventing moderate to severe outcomes; breakthrough infections may still occur even when vaccinated; effectiveness with variants not fully known

ii. Outcomes of COVID-19 disease are less severe among children (<16 yrs)

iii. Where applicable, one dose + 21 days of an approved vaccine offers good protection; a full course of the vaccine (e.g. 2 doses) is optimal protection

iv. Asymptomatic transmission decreases with vaccination – the magnitude of this effect is not yet known

v. Herd protection will be achieved when 80% of PEI’s eligible population has been fully vaccinated (e.g. 2 doses); some degree of herd protection will be provided with 1 dose

vi. There will be a continued vaccine supply and distribution

vii. Vaccines are an additional layer of protection to other public health measures

viii. There will be good update of vaccination in PEI (80% of eligible population) and in Canada