

March 3, 2021

Dr. Charles Gardner
Medical Officer of Health and CEO
Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit
15 Sperling Drive
Barrie, ON L4M 6K9

Via email: charles.gardner@smdhu.org

Good day Dr. Gardner

I hope my letter finds you well and I hope you are giving regard to your own health as this is a stressful and difficult time for all of us as community leaders. I want to open with and acknowledge that you have the challenging position of being designated with Chief Officer of Health's authority during a very long and gruesome pandemic emergency. I appreciate all the hard work and dedication that has gone into your efforts to date. However, I have concerns that are listed below.

This is my third attempt to gain your approval for a solution to the inequities we feel we have with regard to Zone health protocols as it relates to our coverage in the Simcoe Muskoka region. I sent you a letter dated November 2, 2020, from the Township. I then signed a joint letter with the District of Muskoka Mayors on December 17, 2020, which you were cc'd to give you an idea of the residents and businesses' situation in the Township of Lake of Bays and Muskoka. We have had a different story to tell than most of the major centers of outbreaks. I acknowledge that we are part of the Muskoka district, but in that regard, Lake of Bays has not seen justifiable case counts to warrant a lockdown. My more significant concern is that we are recently straddled March 1, 2021, with a new Color Code with new restrictions that will negatively affect all of my businesses, adding a new layer of difficulty as they try to survive this difficult time.

I also want to add that my voice represents over 150 businesses, of which half are reporting losses to heavy losses due to having to operate under strict health restrictions. I have over 20 food service establishments, approximately ten personal care businesses, and many businesses that were unable to operate last year or had to operate under very heavy restrictions that caused devastating financial burdens that may never be able to be reversed. Although the governments have offered some financial assistance, many of my businesses do not qualify or cannot carry the weight of a loan repayment scenario that would add another burden to a difficult seasonal economy.

I have several points of interest that you must be made aware of to make a more informed decision about my Township and Muskoka district. I strongly recommend that you

reconsider your position in keeping Muskoka and Simcoe under the same health protocols as we move forward through the coming months, working together to protect all aspects of our resident's lives and livelihoods:

1. Although decisions have been made based on seasonal traffic and their weight on our health care system, seasonal residents have been coming and going to their properties in Lake of Bays with little or no effect on our case count.
2. Our hospitals have not been impacted to an unmanageable degree. <http://muskokaalgonquinhealthcare.blogspot.com/2021/02/looking-forward-after-one-year-with.html>
3. By my observation, most traffic travels in a more north to south pattern as populations venture from North Bay to Barrie to shop and use retail facilities in off peak seasons.
4. My Township shares the village of Dorset, which is in Haliburton, and they are in the Orange category. This has caused confusion and outrage amongst the residents and businesses that share the main street. One side of the street is in lockdown, and the other side is in Orange.
5. My residents have repeatedly and faithfully followed health guidelines and spent thousands on P.P.E. and equipment and training to follow protocols to be punished with another lockdown causing extensive collateral damage.

In closing, Muskoka is a very large geographic regional area and is comparative to Simcoe however my populations or case counts are not at all similar. This alone gives reason for reconsideration.

I sincerely thank you for our conversation and look forward to working with you as we successfully conquer this virus in this tremendously stressful and difficult time.

Good luck and stay well.

Sincerely,

Terry Glover
Mayor