

# COVID-19

## Ontario's Renewed Testing Strategy

APRIL 10, 2020

# Goals of Testing

## **Diagnose individuals to help guide clinical care**

- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, however a diagnosis provides valuable information on prognosis and can direct supportive management

## **To decrease spread of COVID-19 in Ontario (“flatten the curve”)**

- Identify cases in order to implement public health containment measures
  - Allows for source identification and contact tracing to identify other potential cases and decrease transmission opportunities
- Understand the epidemiology of COVID-19 in Ontario to guide provincial policy

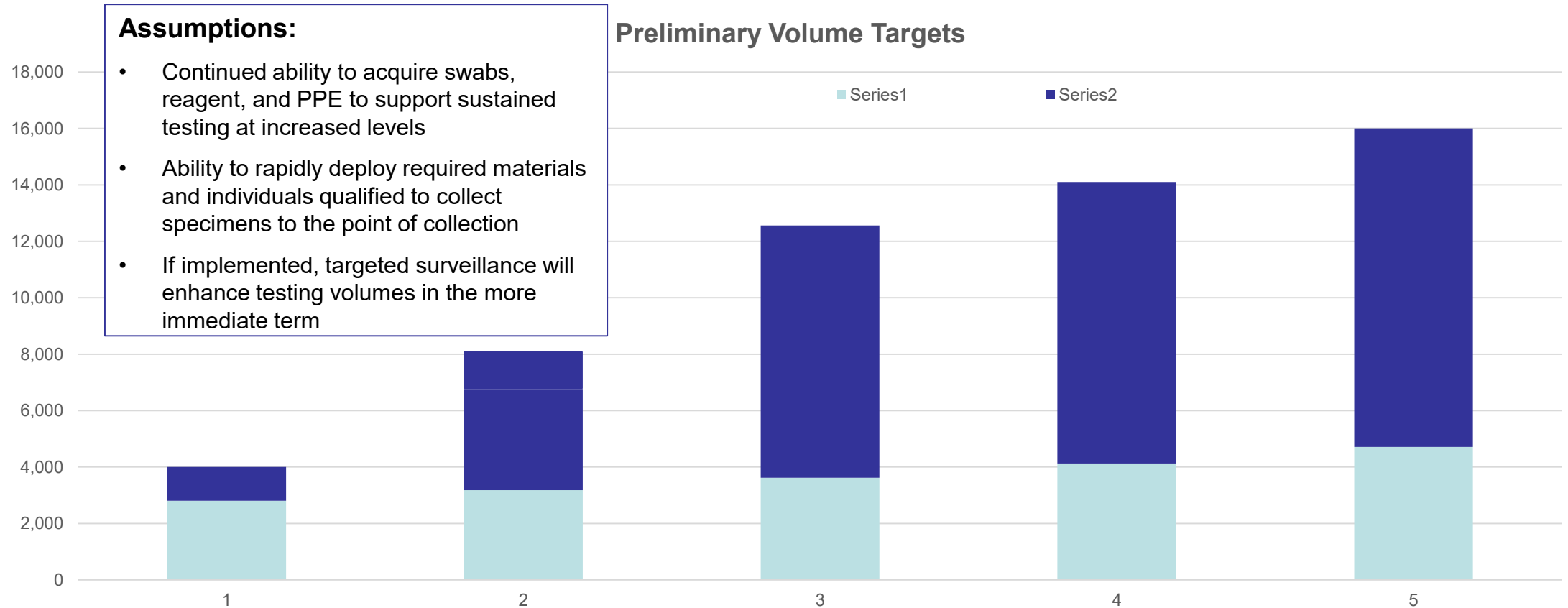
# Populations for COVID Testing

Revised COVID-19 testing guidance will leverage network capacity to focus testing on specific symptomatic populations

	Population Group	Scope	Est. Targeted Volume Impact / day
<i>Current Guidance as of April 9th</i>	Hospitals / Assessment Centres	Patients for whom a test is indicated either by inclusion in priority group, <u>or ALWAYS discretion of the clinician</u>	4,000
	Hospital Inpatients and Long Term Care/Residential Home Residents	Patients requiring/likely requiring inpatient admission. Residents in long-term care/nursing homes/retirement homes	2,600
	Hospital Workers/Caregivers/Care Providers	Hospital workers, caregivers (i.e. volunteers, family members) and care providers (i.e. employees and privately-hired support workers) and first responders	3,450
	Other Healthcare Workers and First Responders / First Responders	All other healthcare workers and employees in health care service delivery settings not covered by previous guidance updates (i.e. clinics, home care, community care, primary care) as well as first responders/emergency services employees (police, paramedics, fire)	3,450
	Indigenous and Remote Communities	Persons currently living on/returning from/planning to enter into an identified first nations/indigenous reserve or in remote/isolated/rural areas	950
	Other Congregate Living and Institutions	i.e. homeless shelters, prisons, day care for essential workers, group homes, community supported living, disability-specific communities/congregate settings and associated workforce	2,250
<i>Future</i>	Specific Vulnerable Populations	I.e. chemo/cancer, hemodialysis, transplant, pregnant persons, newborns, frequent travelers, cross-border workers	TBC
	Essential Workers	Non healthcare workers per provincial guidance	750
	Targeted surveillance	Immediate sampling of populations within northern towns	800

# Path to 16,000 Tests / Day

With expected growth in community testing (i.e. tests at hospitals and assessment centres) this testing strategy targets daily test volumes of 16,000 tests per day



# Actions Required to Support Implementation

- **Testing Strategy Expert Panel to continue to meet:** Will develop further recommendations and review implementation progress to optimize available capacity in response to volumes
- **Detailed implementation plans for Long-Term Care and Residential Home Residents, Caregivers and Care Providers priority population groups:** Implementation groups have been established to coordinate execution
- **Clarity regarding logistics to transport specimens to labs required:** Provincial Dispatch, Transportation and Logistics work stream to refine plan
- **Education of new testing strategy thresholds :** Implementation groups to develop rollout plan and directives related to daily/twice daily rounding of all residents for screening

# Contact Tracing Workforce

- 34 Public Health Units (PHUs) each with staff to conduct local contact tracing
  - Some employing local volunteers (medical students)
  - For example: Toronto Public Health has approximately 150 medical students; Middlesex London Health Unit has approximately 60 medical students
- Enhanced centralized contact tracing assistance
  - Rolled out the week of April 6th
  - 200 Health Canada Volunteers completing training
  - 30 DND volunteers completing training
    - Of both groups above 165 completed both parts of training
  - 200 Ontario Health Volunteers being brought on next week

# Provincial Guidance for COVID Testing

Comparison to other provinces outlines that the current planned testing strategy now aligns favourably with other provinces, with a focus on symptomatic patients only being common practice

Priority Population Group	Ontario Current Status	Alberta Comparison	Quebec Comparison	British Columbia Comparison
Hospital Inpatients and Long Term Care/Residential Home Residents	In latest guidance plus transfers	Excludes transfers	Excludes transfers. Adds asymptomatic outbreak cases (outbreak higher threshold of two cases/unexpected resp death)	Excludes Retirement Homes, transfers. Adds testing six symptomatic samples for outbreak
Hospital Workers/Caregivers/Care Providers	In latest guidance	Aligned	Aligned	Aligned
Other Healthcare Workers and First Responders	In latest guidance	Aligned	Aligned	Excludes first responders
Indigenous and Remote Communities	In latest guidance	No guidance	Aligned	No guidance
Other Specific Vulnerable Populations (chemo/cancer, hemodialysis, transplant)	In draft	No guidance	No guidance	No guidance
Essential Workers	In draft	No guidance	Current guidance	No guidance
Targeted surveillance	In draft	Unknown	As guided by public health	Unknown
Other Congregate Living and Institutions	In draft	Adds further correctional facility staff, further COVID enforcement roles	In current guidance	No guidance

# Asymptomatic Testing

- Testing individuals with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 allows confirmation of whether or not that symptom is caused by COVID (positive) or something else (negative)
- If an individual has no symptoms, are tested and the result is negative, it's important to note that person could be in their incubation period or become infected from a subsequent contact
  - Does not change public health measures as contacts or high-risk groups would still need to continue in self-isolation for the required time period (e.g. does not allow an earlier return to work following exposure)
- A test is a “point-in-time” picture, so a negative test in an asymptomatic person would require repeated testing to know if they remain negative
- It is recommended only in certain high-risk settings (e.g. institutional outbreak) because of the severe outcomes associated with even the small chance of asymptomatic spread
- No provinces conducting asymptomatic testing outside of high-risk settings