

The Need for COVID-19 Testing in Niagara

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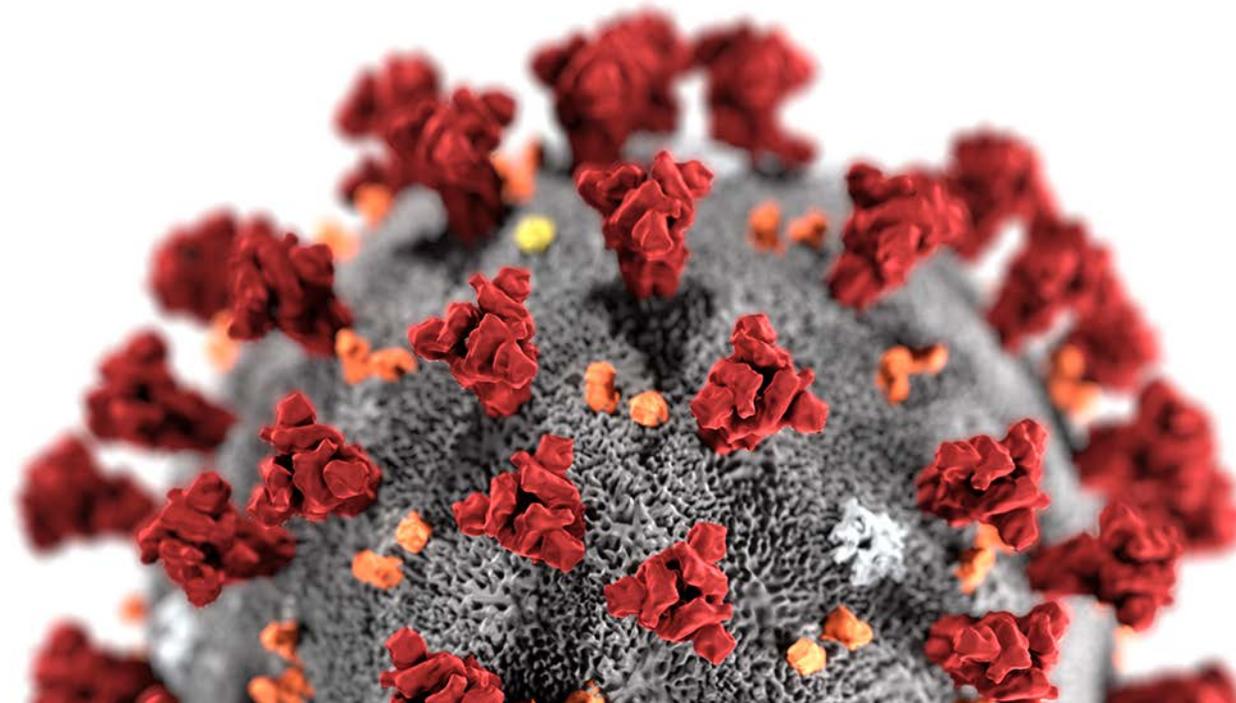


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Two Niagara citizens who believe massive testing and tracking is required if we are going to beat the COVID virus and get the economy moving before we have a vaccine.

The Need for COVID-19 Testing in Niagara

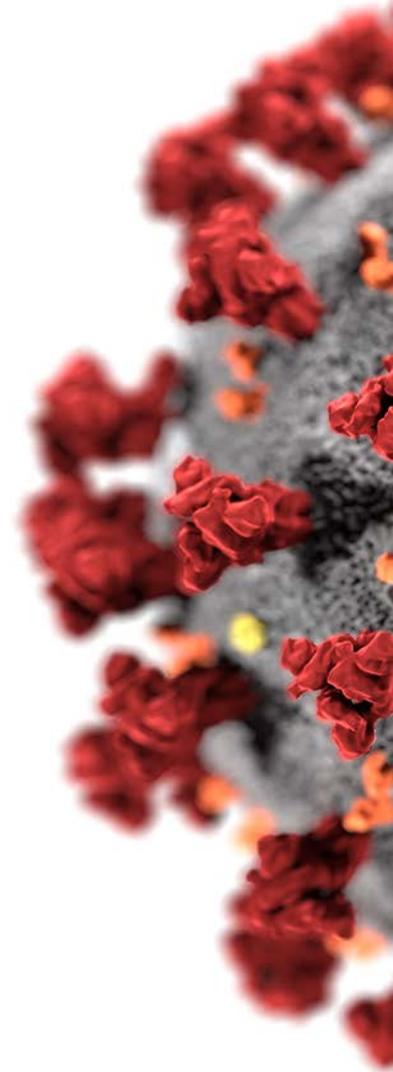
A CALL TO ACTION





The Ask

Support and cooperation to develop a publicly run licensed laboratory, sample collection system and tracking system within Niagara Region to be in place no later than September 1, 2020.

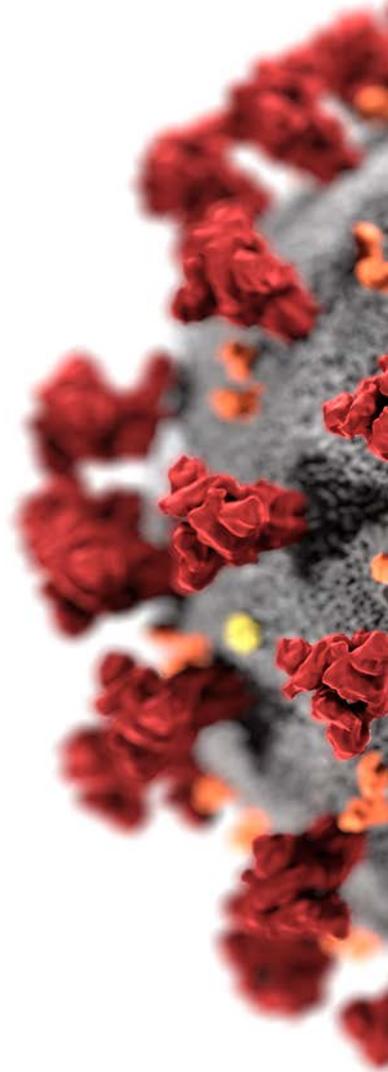




Our Regional Health Situation

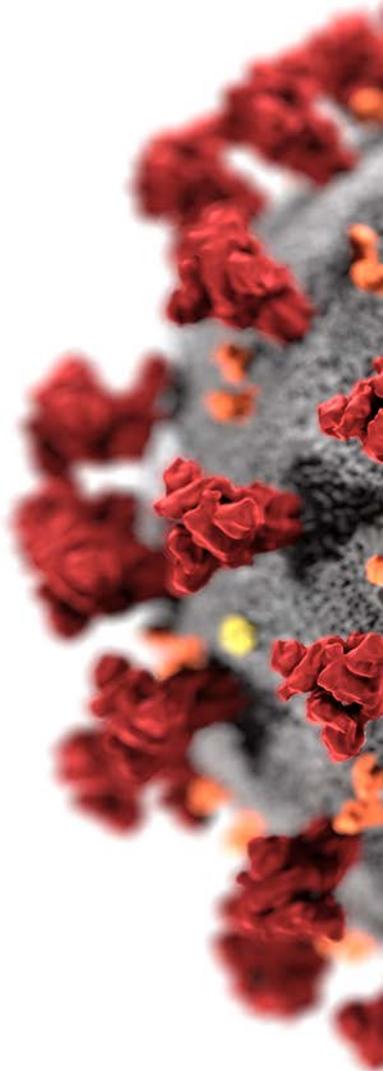
- Niagara population 450,000
- Tested in Niagara 7,000 or 1.53% *
- Positive tests 472
- Untested population includes:
 - Current asymptomatic positives (% unknown)
 - Previous asymptomatic positives (% unknown)
 - Never infected (% unknown)

* Includes double testing





Our Regional Economic Situation

- Population of Niagara – 450,000
 - GDP of Niagara - \$18.5 Billion per annum
 - Every 1% drop costs \$185 million
 - What is the unemployment rate?
 - How many businesses will not recover?
 - Government revenues ↓ Government expenses ↑
- 



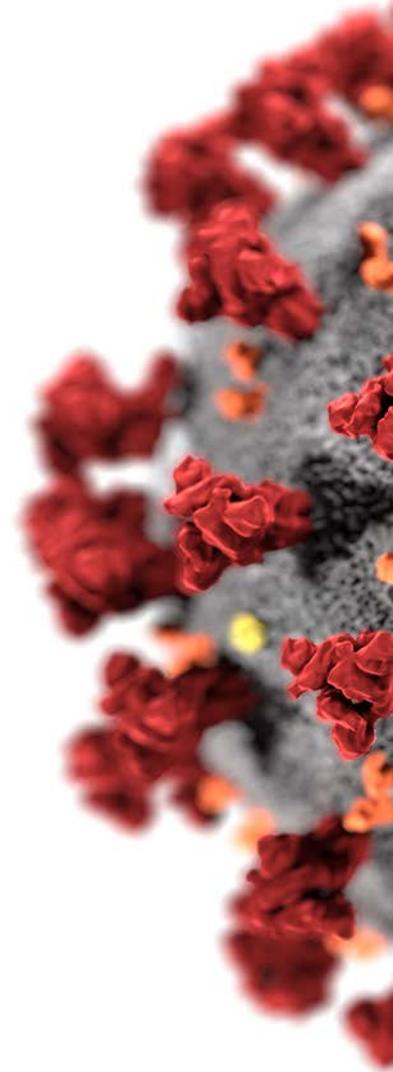
Personal Situation

Financial hardships:

- Unemployed?
- Working from home (stress)
- Savings and pension plans down (stress)
- Future uncertainty (stress)

Social isolation hardships:

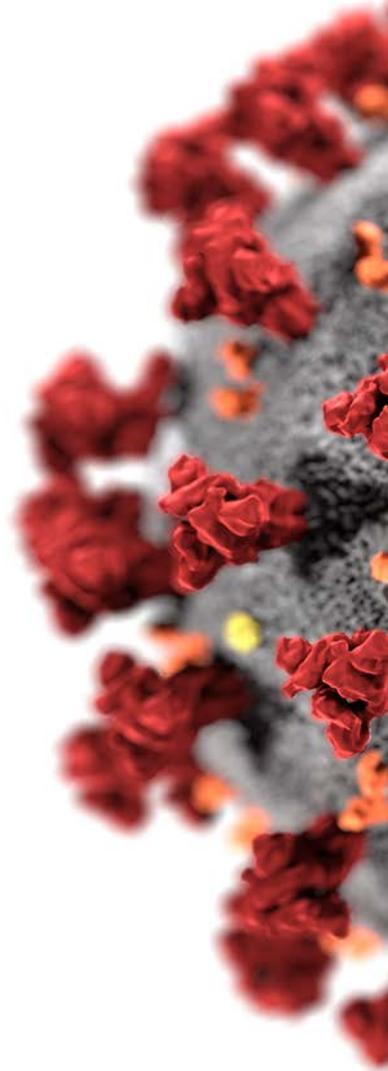
- No direct contact with friends and extended family
- No sports, gatherings, concerts, shows
- Growing frustration





Current Situation

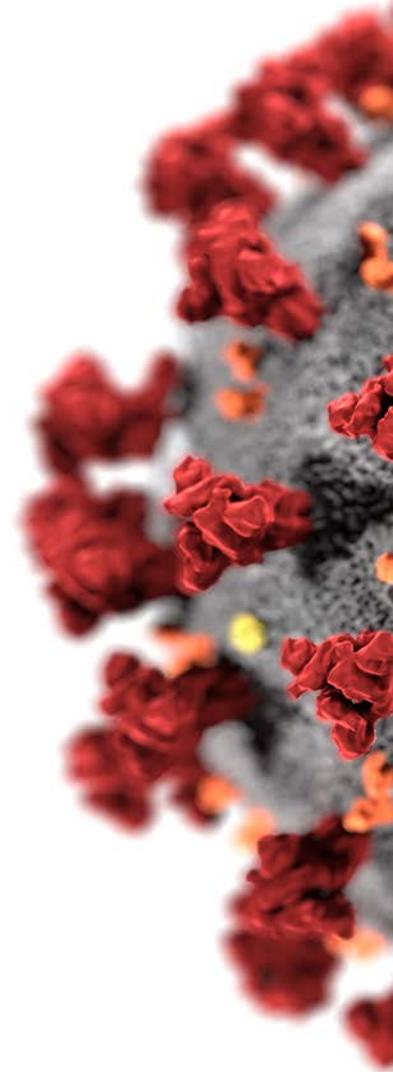
- Sample collection done at two makeshift collection centres
- Need referral to get tested (or a front line worker) and not all get tested.
- 7,000 tests to date including multiple tests per person
- No general population testing. Only 12,000 per day in all of Ontario (target 16,000).
- No lab sites for testing in Niagara
- Extended wait times
- Limited data for analysis or confidence
- Minimal tracking





Gold Standard – South Korea

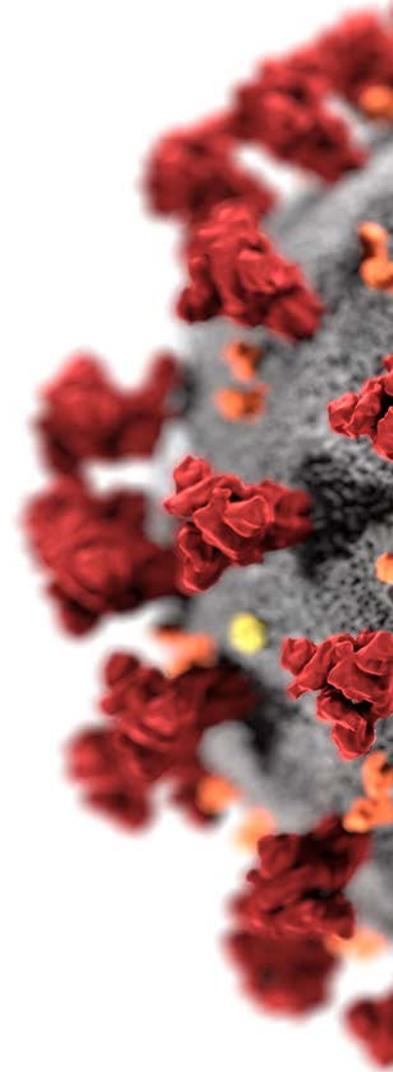
	South Korea	Canada
Population (2019 - millions)	51.6	37.6
Cases (May 3)	10,801	59,844
Deaths (May 3)	282	3,766
Tests (May 3) ³	633,921	897,444





Why the Difference

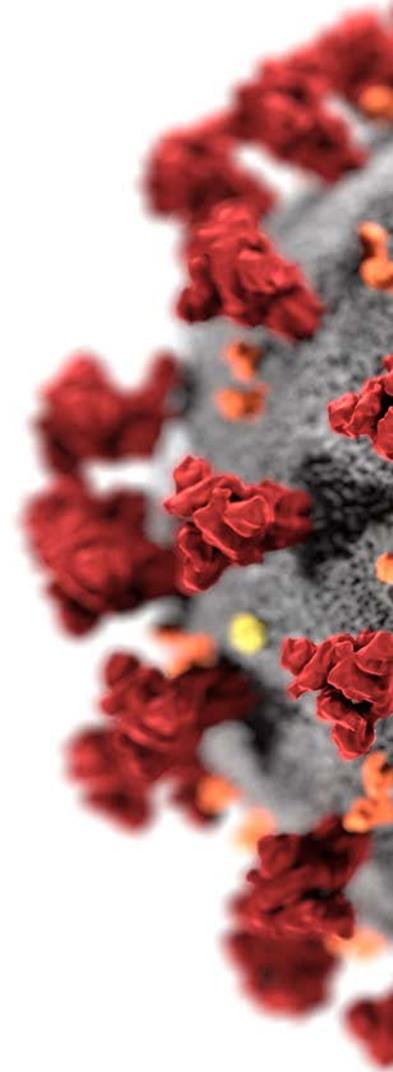
- More testing earlier by South Korea
- Quicker isolation of positive tests
- Outstanding tracking system
- Result = fewer deaths and lower economic impact





Key Issues

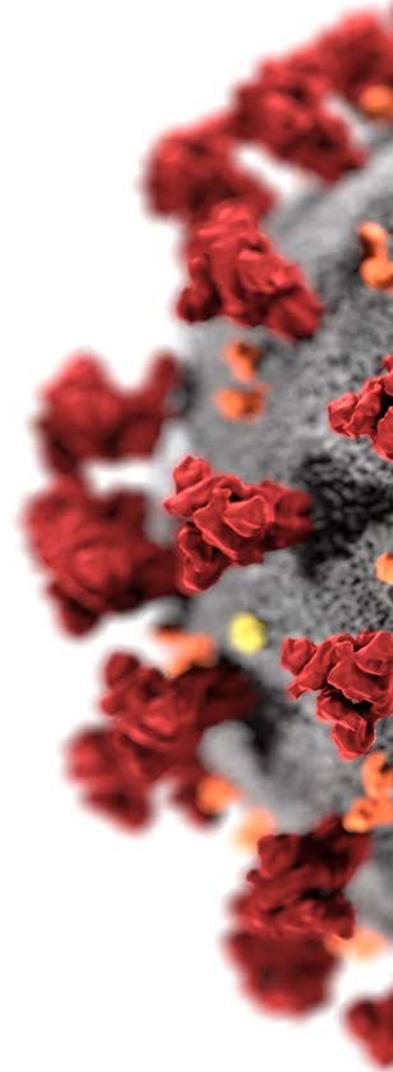
- Lack of testing capacity and slow turnaround time
- Lack of diligent tracking and isolation process
- Widespread isolation versus targeted isolation





Looking Ahead

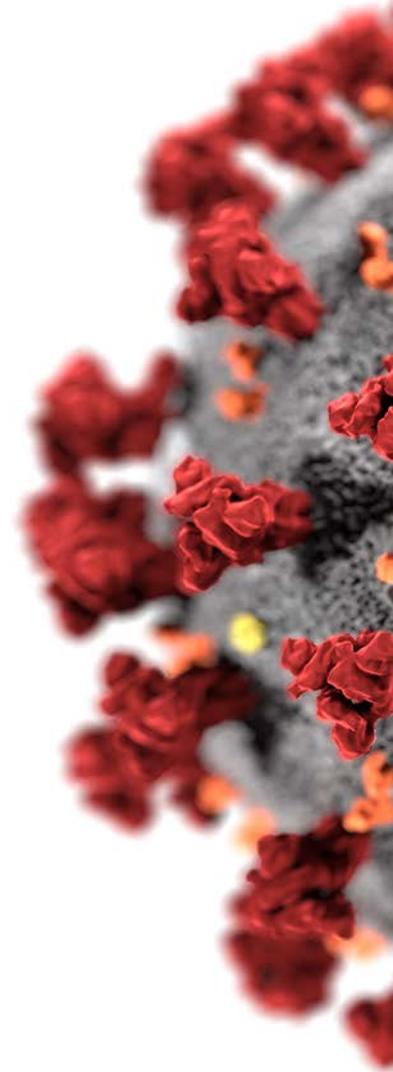
- More infections if we open too soon
- ***More waves of COVID-19***
- Potential mutations
- ***Fall flu season***
- No immunities guaranteed
- Children going back to school in the fall





Options

1. Let nature run its course (lengthy)
2. Open gradually and respond to increase infections (no data so possibility of widespread isolation again)
3. Widespread testing with tracking
 - 10,000 a day testing
 - Results in 24 hours
 - All Niagara in 50 days
4. Less aggressive testing with tracking
 - 5,000 a day testing
 - Results in 24 hours
 - All Niagara in 100 days





Cost of Option 4

Capital \$2-4 million

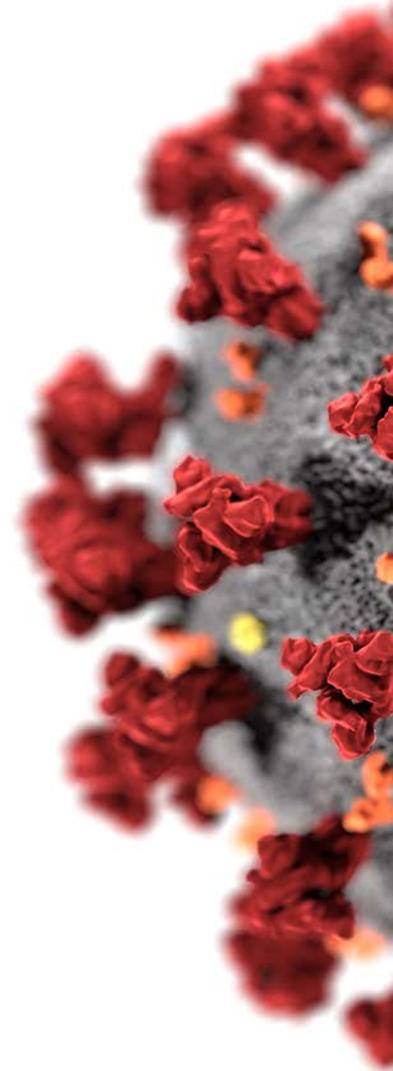
Annual Operating of the Lab \$3 million

Testing and Tracking >\$250k per day or \$1.8 million/week

Submitted proposal to Province of Ontario seeking approval and a budget

Federal funding may be available to assist in paying for project

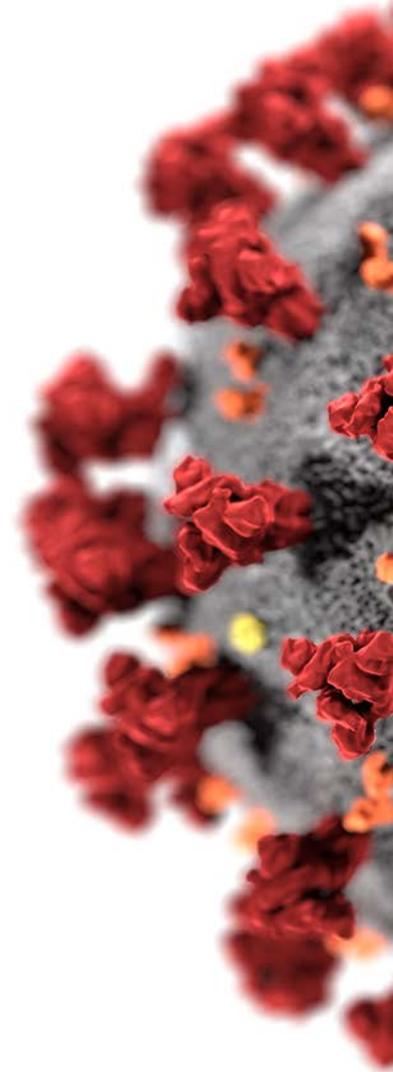
Regional support would enhance potential for success





Actions To-Date

- Sourced equipment and supplies for proposed level of testing through a local enterprise (Norgen)
- Received support from Niagara Health Sciences
- Two options for laboratory location
- Submitted proposal to Government of Ontario





Next Steps

Seek Niagara Region Council support and cooperation for initiative

1. Commitment to action – Sept 1 go live date
2. Appoint steering committee
3. Appoint full time experienced project head
4. Three full time managers
 1. Laboratory manager
 2. Sample collection manager
 3. Tracing manager
5. Give mandate and budget
6. Remove roadblocks

