



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MEDIA RELEASE

COVID-19 SCREENING KIT PROGRAM EXPANDING TO INCLUDE ST. MARYS AND PERTH COUNTY

Pilot Program Partnership with Communitech & Waterloo Region opens access to more businesses

Stratford, ON – April 29, 2021... Today, Stratford's Mayor Dan Mathieson, St. Marys Mayor Al Stratthdee and Perth County Warden Jim Aitchison announced that the The StaySafe™ COVID-19 Rapid Screening Pilot launched last week in the City of Stratford will be expanding to include businesses in St. Marys and Perth County. The screening kits are part of a program managed by Waterloo Region's Communitech and available free of charge to all small-medium sized businesses to detect the virus in staff not showing any symptoms. Early response to last week's announcement that the Screening Pilot was expanding to Stratford has been very positive with 5,500 tests ordered almost immediately by local businesses.

Funded by the Provincial and Federal Governments, the StaySafe™ program provides free rapid antigen point-of-care tests for employees of small- and medium-sized businesses to detect cases of COVID-19 in the workplace that might otherwise be missed, helping to keep workers and their families safe. Small & medium businesses (under 150 employees) in sectors considered essential and where employees cannot work from home or physically distance are encouraged to participate.

This pilot is complementary to those participating in the Provincial Antigen Screening Program. Through this program, 20-minute rapid testing is provided to workplaces for asymptomatic staff in key sectors such as manufacturing, warehousing, supply chain, mining, construction and food processing. The "self-swab" uses a faster, more efficient COVID-19 rapid antigen point-of-care screening test under the supervision of a trained person.

investStratford, Destination Stratford, the Stratford City Centre BIA and the Stratford and District Chamber of Commerce worked with the Waterloo Region program collaborators, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Communitech and the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, to bring the StaySafe™ COVID-19 Rapid Screening Pilot to Stratford and the City of Stratford has worked to extend that partnership to include St. Marys and Perth County.

Orders placed before 3pm Friday will be available for pick-up in Stratford on the following Monday (Destination Stratford, 47 Downie St.) between 1:30-4:30pm. Businesses wanting to order their kits immediately or more frequently can order and pick-up directly at the Communitech Hub (151 Charles Street West, Suite 100, Kitchener). **Businesses are asked to order a 2 week supply of rapid screening kits based on screening employees 2-3 times per week.**

All interested businesses must register for the Antigen Screening Program at: <https://tests.staysafescreen.ca> before ordering screening kits directly. Businesses must report aggregated results through Communitech's StaySafe portal. <https://staysafescreen.ca/>

These kits are an additional tool in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Individual self-screening should continue and anyone symptomatic, a close contact or with suspicion of infection needs to self-isolate and follow Ontario's Testing Guidelines. <https://bit.ly/2QnfQsM>

For screening guidelines and frequently asked questions visit Communitech Business Resources <https://bit.ly/2QOthSg>. Full Ontario Release here: <https://bit.ly/3n8ey0M>

QUOTES:

"Joining this program will add an additional tool to the toolbox for Perth County businesses in helping to keep their workplaces safe and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in all of our communities. We would like to thank all of the partners involved for working collaboratively to expand this important program." **Jim Aitcheson, Warden, County of Perth**

"I cannot thank our partners at Communitech and in Waterloo Region enough for extending this program to include our partner communities of St. Marys and Perth County. The response from Stratford's businesses has been tremendous proving that these kits are a critical tool for us as we work to keep businesses, employees and families safe. We are in this together, never more so than now. Thank you again to the Ontario and Federal Governments for their support." **Dan Mathieson, Mayor, City of Stratford**

"This is very exciting news for our businesses. The rapid testing is another tool to support their efforts to keep their employees and workplaces safe from COVID-19." **Al Strathdee, Mayor, Town of St. Marys**

"This is a great example of what Ontario and Canada can do when governments, businesses and communities come together to take on COVID-19; we're stronger together and we won't back down from this virus. Thanks to the leadership of our governments at all levels, the way is paved to make the StaySafe program a reality and bring another tool to bear to reopen our economy and keep it open." **President and CEO, Communitech, Iain Klugman**

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