



Mayor of Markham

For immediate release

April 27, 2020

Avoid the surge **Statement from Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti**

By making decisions based on data and consultation with public health officials, the Provincial Government is taking the right approach by phasing in the re-opening of Ontario's economy. This is not the time to relent and risk a resurgence of COVID-19 cases, further stressing our healthcare system. The Province of Ontario needs to take the lead to create consistency among all municipalities. The last thing I want to see is a repeat of what happened at the beginning of this crisis with varied provincial and municipal announcements, which led to confusion.

In early April, the Province released modelling of ICU capacity for COVID-19, with a projected steep rise in patients by late this month. Collectively, we managed to avoid the forecasted hit to hospitals but if we loosen the reigns too fast, we risk seeing that capacity put to the test. What we managed to avoid in April, we should still avoid in May, June and in the coming months.

Any framework for re-opening the economy has to be careful, thoughtful and measured. No one should have to fight the virus in an intensive care unit. York Region is an Ontario hotspot for COVID-19 cases, with around half of the ICU cases at Markham Stouffville Hospital. Participation House, Markhaven Home for Seniors, Sunrise of Unionville and other facilities are still grappling with outbreaks.

I understand the anxiety and frustration that many of us are feeling during these trying times, especially for businesses and our main streets as they struggle to stay afloat. I have heard sad stories of businesses that have had to vacate their premises, some are shifting their focus online, and all are trying to find ways to rebuild. The threat is not over; the choices we have made and continue to make will make all the difference as we work toward recovery.

I continue to call for a cautious re-opening of the economy. We can learn from other jurisdictions around the world about the impact of re-opening, especially those hit with a second wave. However, for now, protocols have to remain in place to ensure the safety and protection of everyone including our health care heroes. There is much to consider but I am confident that together, including all levels of government, we will succeed in avoiding a spike in COVID-19 cases.