



Mayor of Markham

For immediate release

April 6, 2020

If not a lockdown, we need a crackdown

Statement from Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti

I am calling on Premier Doug Ford and Solicitor General Sylvia Jones to ban being within 2 metres of another person in public spaces, and to include this mandate in the existing provincial emergency orders, with an exemption for people who live together. This means police services across the province, including the OPP, need to step up their game and to enforce what is in the emergency orders and fine violators.

We need consistency. This is a serious public health crisis and public health officials say we are in a critical stage of the pandemic. This is not the time to ignore their recommendations. If provincial numbers are realized, that means more people will die from COVID-19 this month alone than are killed in traffic accidents across Ontario annually. In a flood or forest fire, we would urge people to evacuate those areas to minimize the loss of life. Social evacuation is now the new normal. Stay home. Save lives.

I have reached out to businesses throughout Markham asking them to donate personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect health care providers in our community including for Markham Stouffville Hospital, Markhaven Home for Seniors, Bethany Lodge and Yee Hong long-term care facilities which are already experiencing a critical shortage of supplies.

Our thoughts and concerns go beyond Markham. I have spoken to Chief Harvey Yesno of Eabametoong First Nation, Markham's Indigenous partner, regarding the situation on the ground in the remote First Nation community, which now has one confirmed case of COVID-19. He says there is increased anxiety and expressed concerns over a chronic shortage of nurses and other medical personnel. Thank you to the senior levels of government for giving them assurances that protective equipment will be provided soon.

Ideas keep pouring in, an ICU physician reached out with a wonderful suggestion to support health care providers and first responders by affording them time to shop for food and supplies, as was given to seniors. I strongly urge grocery stores, pharmacies and essential businesses to dedicate some time and provide special checkout lanes to spare our heroes from waiting in line, so they can get back to keeping us safe.

Despite the concerns, I am hearing stories of compassion and strength in the face of adversity. Thank you to all the generous residents and businesses who are rising to action in service of our communities.