

BY EMAIL

April 6, 2022

Mayor Jim Watson
Members of Ottawa City Council
City Hall
110 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa Ontario
K1P 1J1

We are urgently concerned about the health and safety of Civic Institute of Professional Personnel (CIPP) members employed by the City of Ottawa and the broader community they serve.

Wastewater COVID levels in Ottawa are at their highest point since the beginning of the pandemic and continue to rise, and hospital and ICU occupancy levels are now following.

The province has left us all exposed. With public health regulations revoked and most reliable measures for COVID-19 abandoned, we now must turn to our City to provide leadership and ensure safe workplaces in our community.

Our municipal professionals are asking three things of you today:

1. Delay the planned return of more City of Ottawa employees to the workplace until the full scope and impact of this new pandemic wave has been assessed.
2. Reinstate masking and physical distancing requirements in City workplaces and facilities.
3. Enhance ventilation and air filtration in all workplaces.

The broad scientific and medical consensus is that the withdrawal of measures requiring masking and physical distancing are feeding the current record spread of COVID-19.

In addition, maximizing the number of air changes per hour (ACH) and providing for HEPA filtration of indoor air have proven to be highly effective in interrupting the transmission of COVID-19.

Dr. Vera Etches has expressed her deep concern with the current rapid rise of COVID-19 in our community. And she has reiterated a strong recommendation for masking in all indoor public spaces. Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Teresa Tam, has called on all Canadians to "wear their mask and keep those layers of (other) measures."

.../2

In a survey this week of CIPP members, with a 40% response rate, the vast majority (72%) told us that given the rapid and record rise in wastewater counts of COVID-19 in Ottawa, they want their employer to delay the return to the workplace.

The majority of our members have also indicated that they would feel safer in the workplace with mask requirements, physical distancing, and improved ventilation and air filtration.

Mayor Watson, Councillors, we urge you to take immediate action to protect your employees and the residents they serve from the current rapid rise of COVID-19 in Ottawa.

The failure of the provincial government to protect the health and safety of residents and workers does not absolve the City of Ottawa of this responsibility. For example, Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act sets out clear obligations for the employer to minimize exposure to hazards in the workplace.

The people of Ottawa expect their municipal government to set a positive example for other employers and organizations in their community. They also expect their municipal government to show particular concern for the most vulnerable among them.

Every day, CIPP members demonstrate their commitment to building a city that thrives together. They have been proud to contribute to the City's important efforts to protect and support the people of Ottawa from the outset of the pandemic.

CIPP is asking you to take action to protect your employees and our community. We urge you to act now, to demonstrate leadership, and protect our city.

Sincerely,



Peter Bleyer
Executive Director

cc. Steve Kanellakos, City Manager
Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health