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To: All owners and operators of recreational fitness facilities

Re: Recreational fitness facilities and COVID-19 transmission

COVID-19 has impacted every part of our community, and each of us has a story about the impact it has had on our lives. This pandemic is causing personal and professional stressors to collide, and so I want to acknowledge how challenging these times are. Recently there has been increased attention on certain types of settings, including indoor recreational facilities, as places that may be higher risk for the transmission of COVID-19. You are likely aware of the significant outbreak that occurred in the Hamilton region as a result of indoor fitness classes. That public health outbreak investigation found that the gym was following the current guidelines for indoor recreation facilities. This situation highlights that while the measures in place in guidance documents help to reduce risk, they do not eliminate the risk entirely. At the same time, recreational facilities such as yours provide an important social connection and an opportunity to maintain or improve physical health and wellness.

Going forward, on behalf of Lambton Public Health, I want to remind you of the publicly available [Guidance for facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities during COVID-19](#). This document includes important considerations, such as:

- Ensuring **active screening** of staff and patrons.
- Ensuring that the building heating, venting and air conditioning (**HVAC**) system is well maintained in accordance to manufacturer's instructions and meets minimum American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standards.
- Ensuring that **physical distancing of at least 2 metres** is maintained between every person involved in any exercise, as well as among staff and patrons wherever possible.
- Ensuring **capacity limits** are set for each facility room based on current regulations, as well as the ability to maintain physical distance at all times.
- Ensuring all persons (including staff, patrons and visitors) **wear a face covering** while in the facility. Note that the WHO recommends *against* the use of masks while exercising, so physical distancing should be reinforced in these settings.
- Ensuring all appropriate infection prevention and control (**IPAC**) measures are in place.

At this time, there are no additional local requirements beyond the provincial regulations for recreational fitness facilities, but we will continue to monitor the local situation.

I encourage you to visit our website for additional resources regarding [Sports and Recreation](#). Feel free to send us your questions through the "[Ask a Question](#)" section on our website. We are also planning to host a virtual meeting to share information with you and to help answer your questions - a separate invitation will follow.

I thank you for the role you play in our community, and for your commitment to health and wellbeing.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sudit Ranade
Medical Officer of Health, Lambton County