Beat: Health

Phase 2 of Nova Scotia's Reopening Plan

Begins at 8 am Wednesday June 16th

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USPA NEWS - During the June 15th COVID-19 media briefing, Premier Iain Rankin said, "Starting tomorrow, you can expand your friends and family social circle. Ten can gather indoors, with 25 outdoors, so for those of you who have been away from family, tomorrow you can get that long-awaited hug." The Premier went on to say, "You can now enjoy a meal inside, and start to go to the gym again, opening at 50 percent, start to go more and more to retail operators that are now increasing capacity to 50 per cent. Recognized businesses and organizations are permitted to start organizing outside and indoor events with restrictions. Long-term care residents can enjoy activities."

Premier Rankin said that the success of Phase 1 of the Nova Scotia Reopening Plan was dependent on everyone following the public health restrictions, people being tested regularly, and as many people possible getting
vaccinated. He acknowledged that Nova Scotians stepped up to the plate and by doing their part allowed the province to advance to Phase 2 of the 5 phase plan.

Premier Rankin also announced that as of June 23, 2021 a new Atlantic Bubble would be created so that residents of Newfoundland, PEI and Nova Scotia would be able to travel freely throughout the 3 provinces without having to self-isolate. At the time of this announcement New Brunswick could not commit to the June 23rd date, but has since announced that the New Brunswick border will be open to Atlantic Canadian travelers and the rest of Canada as of midnight Wednesday June 16th.

Dr Robert Strang, Nova Scotia's chief medical officer of health, presented the following list of restrictions that would be eased in Phase 2.

Gatherings: Informal gatherings can have 10 people indoors and 25 outdoors without physical distance. Informal faith gatherings can have 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors plus officiants; drive-in services are still allowed with attendees following the informal indoor gathering limit in their vehicles. Informal weddings and funerals, and associated receptions and visitation, can have 10 people indoors and 25 outdoors, plus officiants and when faith gatherings, weddings, funerals and associated receptions and visitation are hosted by a recognized business or organization, they can have 25 percent capacity to a maximum of 50 people indoors or 75 people outdoors.

Business: Restaurants and licensed establishments can operate indoors and outdoors at their maximum capacity with physical distance between patrons at different tables and a limit of 10 people per table; people must wear masks when not eating or drinking; one performer of live music is permitted; service must stop by 11 p.m. and establishments must close by midnight. All retail stores can operate at 50 percent capacity with no limit on the number of shoppers per household. Personal services such as hair salons, barber shops and spas can operate by appointment only following their sector plan and can resume offering services that require removing the customer's mask. Meetings and training hosted by a recognized business or organization can have 25 per cent capacity to a maximum of 50 people indoors or 75 people outdoors. Driving schools and exams can resume. Events hosted by a recognized business or organization can have 25 per cent capacity to a maximum of 50 people indoors or 75 people outdoors; organizers need a plan following guidelines for events.

Recreation and Sport: Fitness and recreation facilities such as gyms, yoga studios, pools and arenas can operate at 50 percent capacity. A wide variety of recreation and leisure businesses and organizations, such as dance classes, music lessons, escape rooms and indoor play spaces can operate at 25 percent capacity. Organized sports practices can involve up to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors without physical distancing. Audiences follow the gathering limits for events hosted by a recognized business or organization. Day camps can operate with 15 per group and following approved day camp guidelines. Activities such as darts, cards and bingo can resume when hosted by either licensed or unlicensed establishments following guidelines for these activities.

Arts and Culture: Amateur arts and culture rehearsals and virtual or in-person performances can involve up to 10 people indoors and 25 outdoors without physical distancing. Professional arts and culture rehearsals and virtual or in-person performances can involve up to 15 people indoors and 25 outdoors without physical distancing. Audiences follow the gathering limits for events hosted by a recognized business or organization. Drive-in movie theaters can continue to operate with attendees following the informal indoor gathering limit in their vehicles. Museums, libraries and the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia can open at 25 percent capacity.

Continuing Care: Community-based adult day programs for seniors and for people with disabilities can resume following guidelines for their sector. Long-term care residents can go for a walk off facility grounds and use drive-thrus when they go for a drive with a designated care provider; vaccinated residents can also access outdoor public areas such as a park. Recreational activities and personal services like hair styling can resume for long-term care residents who are not fully vaccinated. Long-term care residents no longer need to be in the same groups for dining and group activities and volunteers can resume their activities.

Dr. Strang closed by saying, "These may seem like small steps, but will add up to spending a summer together safely. We want to keep moving forward but right now that means slowly and cautiously with optimism about the future." He encourages everyone to continue to follow the public health guidelines, wear a mask when required, get tested and get vaccinated as soon eligible.

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