THE PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
MEDIA RELEASE
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THE PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Rolling Out Free Rapid Tests to SMEs

Ontario Chamber Network begins distributing rapid tests to help keep businesses and communities safe through
COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative

Prince Edward County – May 31, 2021 – The Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Ontario and Canadian governments and the County of Prince Edward, have launched the COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative. A dedicated page in our website to order screening tests for your employees is now live at www.pecchamber.com . Through this initiative, the PEC Chamber will roll out free rapid tests for small-and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) in Prince Edward County.

"Chambers of commerce and boards of trade have been indispensable resources in their communities since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis. Public health and the health of our economy are interdependent. That is why our chamber is proud to distribute rapid tests to small businesses in The County. We hope that through this program, we will be able to curb the spread and reopen our local economy safely," said Lesley Lavender at The Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce.

The COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative will provide free rapid antigen tests for employees of small and medium-sized businesses. Businesses (including non-chamber members) with 150 employees or fewer are welcome to participate in this program. The goal of the program is to identify asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 in the workplace that might otherwise be missed, helping to curb the spread in the workplace, at home and around the community in Prince Edward County.

"Rapid COVID-19 testing will play an important role in keeping workers and our community safe as we gradually reopen the economy. As such, the municipality welcomes the opportunity to support the Prince Edward County Chamber in taking this next step in testing," Mayor Steve Ferguson says. "From the outset of the pandemic, the municipality made it a priority to work closely with our community partners in the fight against COVID-19. We have and will continue to offer up facilities and staff resources to assist with COVID-19 testing as well as administering the vaccine to people in our community."

The Initiative was first successfully piloted in the Waterloo region by the Greater Kitchener Waterloo and Cambridge Chambers of Commerce in partnership with Communitech, the Government of Ontario and Government of Canada. Through this pilot, the chambers have delivered 120,000 kits to nearly 1,400 businesses in the region. This means that up to 30,000 employees in essential workplaces are receiving regular screening twice weekly in the Waterloo region alone. The COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative builds upon the success of this existing program and delivers tests into the hands of small and medium-sized businesses across the province.

"Rapid testing is one of the key ways to keep workplaces as safe as possible during the pandemic as we wait for vaccinations to roll out. It will be an essential part of curbing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities so that we can get on the path to economic recovery faster," said Rocco Rossi, President and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

Interested SMEs can pre-register for the program online at www.pecchamber.com or by contacting the PEC Chamber office (contactus@pecchamber.com). Once the 9,600 kits that have been ordered are delivered, they will be contacted and can schedule their two-week supply of rapid tests for pick-up online.

The kits will be ready for pick-up at the Wellington and District Community Centre (111 Belleville St, Wellington) **by appointment only.** A designate from each SME, responsible for supervising the self-screening collection onsite, will be required to attend the site for the initial pick-up where they will receive video training to properly supervise the screening process.

Each SME will be required to screen staff twice weekly and submit a report on the results of those tests. The aggregated data will be reported to the Ministry of Health bimonthly by the Chamber.

If a test results in a preliminary positive for COVID-19, the employee will be required to leave the workplace immediately, arrange for a PCR Test within 24 hours at an approved COVID-19 assessment site, and self-isolate until a confirmatory test result is received.

"As the indispensable partner of business, we are proud that many of our member chambers of commerce and boards of trade, including the Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce, will be offering this program. Over 1,000,000 rapid tests have already been distributed in communities across Ontario with 90 of our chambers participating in rolling this program out," added Rossi.

We encourage all SME in PEC, members or not of the PEC Chamber to participate in this program.

Stay Safe and healthy

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