



**John Brassard | Member of Parliament**  
Barrie—Innisfil  
Deputy Opposition Whip

## Media Release from Barrie-Innisfil MP John Brassard Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update 5

**For Immediate Release March 19** – Barrie-Innisfil Member of Parliament John Brassard will continue providing daily updates to residents of Barrie-Innisfil during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic through the media, at [johnbrassard.com](http://johnbrassard.com) and on social media sites @JohnBrassardCPC.

With the number of confirmed and presumptive cases of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Canada continuing to rise, MP Brassard says it is extremely important for everyone to heed the advice of Health Canada and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and to commit to social distancing at all times.

“This is a very critical time and we should all be doing everything we can to help contain the spread of the virus in Barrie-Innisfil and across Canada,” Brassard said. “We need to be serious about social distancing because we know it is effective,” Brassard said.

Here are some steps that public health officials suggest:

- Avoid any unnecessary contact with other people
- Stay at least six feet away from others
- Remain at home as much as you can - only going out for essential needs like food and medication
- Work from home if possible
- Do grocery shopping online

“Along with frequent hand washing, social distancing is the most important thing we can do to flatten the curve of transmission of COVID-19 and ease the burden on our hospitals and healthcare workers,” Brassard said.

It’s ultimately about creating physical distance between people who don’t live together. At the community level, it means closing schools and workplaces and canceling events like concerts and live shows. For individuals, it means maintaining a safe distance from others – whether you are inside or outside.

The Prime Minister announced Thursday that Canada and the United States will suspend all non-essential travel across the border by Saturday morning. This decision will not affect shipments, trade or business.

Locally, Brassard participated in a conference call Thursday with local and provincial politicians and the Greater Barrie Chamber of Commerce officials to discuss the impact that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on local businesses in Barrie-Innisfil.

“It’s extremely important to keep the lines of communication open and to recognize the tremendous affect that the pandemic is having on small, medium and large businesses in Barrie-Innisfil,” Brassard said. “I am committed to working with all levels of government and all political parties to do whatever we can for those who are impacted.

### Earlier this week:

- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced \$82 billion in financial aid - \$27 billion in direct support for Canadian families and workers and \$55 billion in economic support for businesses across the country, in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Details of the federal government’s announcement are available [here](#). Anyone with questions regarding Employment Insurance claims related to COVID-19 should call 1-833-381-2725.
- International flights are restricted to just four major Canadian cities – Toronto’s Pearson International and airports in Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary. Travellers exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) will not be permitted to board a plane headed to Canada.
- Emergency loans up to \$5,000 will be made available through Global Affairs Canada to assist Canadians who are abroad and having difficulty returning home. For information, call the emergency 24-7 response centre at (613) 996-8885.
- Barrie’s dedicated COVID-19 assessment centre at 490 Huronia Road will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. until Sunday, Mar. 22. **However, if you have mild symptoms, you are asked to self-isolate** at home instead of attending the testing centre or hospital emergency department. If you have mild symptoms, you will likely **NOT** be tested.
- Parks Canada has suspended visitor services at all national parks and historic sites until further notice.

Brassard is encouraging Barrie-Innisfil residents to visit [johnbrassard.com](http://johnbrassard.com) for the latest information on the pandemic. While the Barrie-Innisfil Constituency Office remains closed to in-person traffic, anyone needing assistance can call 705-726-5959 during regular hours or email

### Follow these steps to protect yourself:

- Wash your hands frequently, for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick
- Stay at least two metres away from anyone who is coughing or sneezing
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve
- Stay at home if you are sick

Brassard’s constituency office remains closed to the public until further notice; however, staff will respond to phone calls, emails and social media inquiries. If you need assistance, call 705-726-5959 or email [John.Brassard@parl.gc.ca](mailto:John.Brassard@parl.gc.ca).

For information about international travel, contact the Government of Canada COVID-19 information line at 1-833-784-4397 or visit [www.Canada.ca/coronavirus](http://www.Canada.ca/coronavirus)

The [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Promos/Novel-Coronavirus) has information on COVID-19 testing, symptoms and more: <http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Promos/Novel-Coronavirus>.

For more information, contact: Office of MP John Brassard at 613-992-3394 [John.Brassard@parl.gc.ca](mailto:John.Brassard@parl.gc.ca)