

Government puts a declining emphasis on COVID PCR tests

ALLISON JONES

TORONTO Ontario’s official COVID-19 testing volumes have plummeted since PCR access was sharply restricted in the face of an Omicron surge, but rather than widely re-expanding eligibility in the future, the province appears to be forging a new pandemic testing path.

Demand for tests at the end of last year saw a high of more than 75,000 processed the day the government announced eligibility would be limited largely to high-risk individuals — including patients in hospital, residents and staff in long-term care, and people being considered for COVID-19 treatments.

There have been calls to allow more residents to access gold-standard PCR tests, including students and staff in schools and child-care settings, now that an average of 25,460 tests have been processed each day over the past week, including a low of 15,008 one day on the weekend.

Instead, the government is sending millions of rapid antigen tests to schools and recent comments from the chief medical officer of health suggest shifting testing priorities, with a declining emphasis provincewide on PCR tests.

A spokeswoman for Health Minister Christine Elliott said Wednesday that Ontario may expand PCR testing to additional groups if there is capacity, and is actively looking at how to expand the use of rapid tests.

But using more rapid tests partly depends on supply from the federal government, and Ontario said that of the 54.3 million tests the federal government promised to deliver to the province in January, only 17.6 million were received.

Public health and infectious disease experts say prioritizing PCR tests for people at high risk for severe disease makes sense, but there are drawbacks to an increasing reliance on rapid tests.

Dr. Andrew Morris, an infectious diseases physician, said rapid tests

COVID-19:
BY THE
NUMBERS

Ottawa
(Reported Wednesday)
301: New cases* (Case numbers are regarded as underestimations due to reduced testing)
58,483: Total cases
6: New deaths
700: Total deaths
2,293: Active cases
79: In hospital
15: In ICU
168.5: Seven-day average of cases per 100,000 people
15.6: Per cent positivity in testing

Ontario
(Reported Wednesday)
3,909: New confirmed cases
1,039,825: Total cases
72: New deaths (includes five from a 'data clean up')
11,576: Total deaths
41,534: Active cases
2,939: Patients in hospital with COVID-related illness
***555:** COVID patients in intensive care

will end up being helpful for an average person’s day-to-day functioning, but they are not a great tool for pandemic surveillance and management.

Rapid antigen tests are proving to be less accurate than PCR tests in detecting Omicron, at least early in an infection, he said, and there is so far no way in Ontario to track positive results.

Quebec has developed a portal for self-reporting rapid test results, and Morris and other experts say Ontario should consider something similar.

The Canadian Press

NOTICE OF FINAL DIVIDEND

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES’ CREDITORS ARRANGEMENT ACT,

R.S.C. 1985, C. C-36, AS AMENDED

AND IN THE MATTER OF A PLAN OF COMPROMISE OR ARRANGEMENT OF GANDALF TECHNOLOGIES INC. (“GTI”), AND GANDALF CANADA LTD. (“GCL”)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT on July 25, 1997, the Ontario Court of Justice (General Division) (the “Court”) granted an order pursuant to provisions of the CCAA (the “Initial Order”), and Deloitte Restructuring Inc. (formerly Deloitte & Touche Inc.) (“Deloitte”) was appointed as Monitor of GTI and GCL.

On October 3, 1997, plans of arrangement for GTI and GCL (the “GTI Plan” and the “GCL Plan”) were filed with the Court. On November 12, 1997, the Court approved amendments to each of the GTI Plan and the GCL Plan that provided for an additional class of creditors.

Meetings of creditors were then held on November 14, 1997 during which, among other things, the creditors unanimously approved both the amended GTI Plan and the amended GCL Plan. On November 21, 1997, the Court issued an order sanctioning the amended GTI and GCL Plans.

As Monitor of GTI, the parent company of Gandalf Systems Corporation (“GSC”), the Monitor negotiated an agreement with all creditors of GSC, wherein GTI would not make a claim against GSC, and thereby not share in any dividends. In exchange, the creditors of GSC agreed not to pursue legal action against GSC or GTI. Pursuant to the agreement, GSC creditors therefore participate in any dividends distributed on the same basis as the creditors of GTI and GSC.

An Employee Retention Plan was established to provide an incentive to employees to continue working for the Gandalf companies during the restructurings. Eligible employees received a total of US\$5,500 (or Canadian dollar equivalent) and payments were made in each of December 1997, July 1998, and October 2015.

In November 1999, GTI and GSC creditors received an initial distribution of 20% on their claim. GCL creditors received an initial distribution of 20% in March 2001.

NOTICE IS ALSO HEREBY GIVEN that the CCAA administration of GTI, GCL and GSC is now complete, and a final dividend was issued in the summer of 2021. For those creditors, including former employees, who did not receive a final dividend cheque, please contact the Monitor either by email at christow@deloitte.ca or at (416) 775-8831 to provide the Monitor with your new contact information to enable you to receive your final dividend cheque.

DELOITTE Restructuring Inc.
8 Adelaide Street West, Suite 200
Toronto, ON M5H 0A9



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