



**CHATHAM-KENT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Chatham-Kent 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

Chatham-Kent – May 10, 2021 – The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Ontario and Canadian governments, have launched the COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative. Through this initiative, the Chatham-Kent Chamber will roll out free rapid tests for small- and medium-sized businesses in Chatham-Kent.

“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 businesses in Chatham-Kent. We hope that through this program, we will be able to curb the spread and reopen our local economy safely and in a timely fashion,” said Gail Hundt, President & CEO at the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce.

The COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative will provide free rapid antigen tests for employees of small and medium-sized businesses. All businesses, including non-chamber members, with 150 employees or less are welcome and encouraged 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 of Chatham-Kent.

The initiative was first successfully piloted 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, these 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 will soon be able to log into www.chatham-kentchamber.ca to order their two-week supply of rapid tests, with roll out of the program shortly following.

With the support of Hydro One, local businesses can pick up test kits at the Fantastic Greetings building located at 920 Richmond Street, Chatham, 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 and safely dispose of the used kits.

Each SME will be required to electronically submit their screening results after each occasion and will be recommended to screen staff twice weekly. The accumulated data will be reported to the Ministry of Health bimonthly.

If a test results in a preliminary positive for COVID-19, the employee will be required to leave the workplace, 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 Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce, will be offering this program, distributing rapid tests to small and local businesses across the province. Over 760,000 rapid tests will be going out to communities across Ontario with 28 of our chambers participating in rolling this program out,” added Rossi.

[Click here to see which chambers](#) and boards of trade are participating in the program to date. More chambers of commerce and boards of trade will be joining in the coming weeks.

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About Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce

With the support of 340 members, the Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is the visionary leader and recognized voice to municipal government for local business. While representing our members diverse needs, we work diligently to enhance the economic prosperity for business and quality of life for the Chatham-Kent community. With long standing memberships in the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce, we deliver a respected voice to provincial and federal matters that affect day to day and continued success of Chatham-Kent business.

Gail Hundt, President & CEO

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