



AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION LOCAL 113

812 WILSON AVENUE, DOWNSVIEW, ONTARIO M3K 1E5 • TEL.: (416) 398-5113 FAX: (416) 398-4978



ANDREW FALOTICO
Health and Safety Representative

KEVIN MORTON
Secretary-Treasurer

All correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary-Treasurer

February 18, 2021

Sent by email to medicalofficerofhealth@toronto.ca
dr.karim.kurji@york.ca
dr.david.williams@ontario.ca

Dr. Eileen De Villa
Medical Officer of Health
277 Victoria St., 5th Flr
Toronto, ON, M5B 1W2

Dr. Karim Kurji
Medical Officer of Health
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON, L3Y 6Z1

Dr. David Williams
Chief Medical Officer of Health
393 University Avenue, 21st Flr
Toronto, ON, M5G 2M2

Dear Dr. De Villa, Dr. Kurji, and Dr. Williams:

As the Health and Safety Representative for the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 (ATU 113), I am writing to express my urgent concern about the failure to date to recognize the reality and risk posed by aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and prevention of such transmission.

The ATU Local 113 represents 12,000 public transit workers in Toronto and York Region. We recently wrote to Premier Ford, the Ministers of Health and Labour, and Dr. Williams to express our concerns regarding the lack of recognition of aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (see attached).

The potential for aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 was identified as a risk over a year ago.

The reality of aerosol transmission of SARS-CoV-2 resulting in COVID-19 infections has been accepted by the Public Health Agency of Canada and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

We believe a clear message on aerosol transmission by all Medical Officers of Health is essential to seeing the adoption of improved prevention measures like better personal protective equipment, ventilation, and air cleaning technologies. The TTC is taking steps to implement improvements like these; however proper guidelines and an enforceable standard are required to ensure effective action is taken.



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Essential workers who are employed in congregate, retail, and other high-density workplaces are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 as a result of poorly ventilated spaces and inadequate PPE. The failure to recognize aerosol transmission of the virus is a significant barrier to seeing that effective and proper action is taken to protect workers.

We are still months away from seeing everyone fully vaccinated. Moving into the next few months, concerns have been expressed about a possible “third wave” due to the more highly transmissible COVID variants.

The tragic results of outbreaks will continue to be seen especially in industrial workplaces and neighbourhood improvement areas, which are communities that have been identified by the City of Toronto as having a higher percentage of low-income households and essential workers who have no choice but to leave their homes every day and go out to work.

Many of these people have increased levels of workplace exposure to COVID-19 and take public transit as they do not have another option. Our operators have no choice but to leave their homes every day to ensure these other essential workers get to work. The risk is there for both groups to transmit the virus to each other in such close quarters where physical distancing is not always possible and where riders are not legally required to wear a face mask.

Improving the guidelines and recognition of the reality and seriousness of aerosol transmission is of great concern to our members. We need to see better ventilation, a better standard of PPE and proper fit, and increased air cleaning measures on public transit. More needs to be done and these measures will absolutely help us flatten the curve.

I am asking you to immediately take the following actions:

- 1) Follow the lead of the Public Health Agency of Canada and issue new guidance on ventilation and PPE that acknowledges and responds to the reality of aerosol transmission; and
- 2) Convene a meeting with representatives of transit workers including ATU, Local 113 to discuss when such guidance will be issued and the content of same.

We are urging you to act immediately, before there is a third wave and before variants which are more transmissible, or more deadly, spread through the community via unsafe workplaces.



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Employers and workers in Toronto and York turn to you for leadership on COVID-19 prevention: we need you to provide the most up-to-date and scientifically based guidance on how we can keep all our residents safe.

We Move Toronto and we would like to do this as safely as possible for all our riders and workers.

I would be pleased to discuss arrangements for a meeting at the earliest opportunity and would ask that you have the appropriate staff contact me directly in order facilitate the same.

Yours truly,

Andrew Falotico
Health & Safety Representative
ATU Local 113

AF:jw

Cc: Carlos Santos – President ATU Local 113
Rick Fox – Vice President ATU Local 113
Kevin Morton – Secretary/Treasurer ATU Local 113
Scott Gordon – ABA - Maintenance ATU Local 113
Frank Malta – ABA - Transportation ATU Local 113
Aleem Tharani – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Phil Horgan – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Tony Meglio – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Micheal Judd – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Pino D'Armiento – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Anthony Wallace – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Marvin Alfred – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Roland Beaudet – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Ross Zambri – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Claudio Cappadocia – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Jason Da Silva – ATU Local 113 Executive Board
Frank Giustini – ATU Local 113 Executive Board



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John DiNino – President ATU Canada
Manny Sforza – International Vice President ATU International
Brian Sherlock – ATU International Safety Specialist
Rick Leary – TTC Chief Executive Officer
Kirsten Watson – TTC Deputy Chief Executive Officer – Operations
Jim Ross – TTC Chief Operating Officer
Rich Wong – TTC Chief Vehicles Officer
Betty Hasserjian – TTC Chief Safety Officer
Councillor Jaye Robinson- TTC Board Chair
Joanne De Laurentiis (Citizen) – TTC Board Vice-Chair
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Councillor Shelley Carroll
Councillor Cynthia Lai
Commissioner Ron Lalonde
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Commissioner Julie Osborne
Councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong
Commissioner Fenton Jagdeo
Hon. Christine Elliott - Minister of Health, Deputy Premier
Hon. Monte McNaughton - Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development