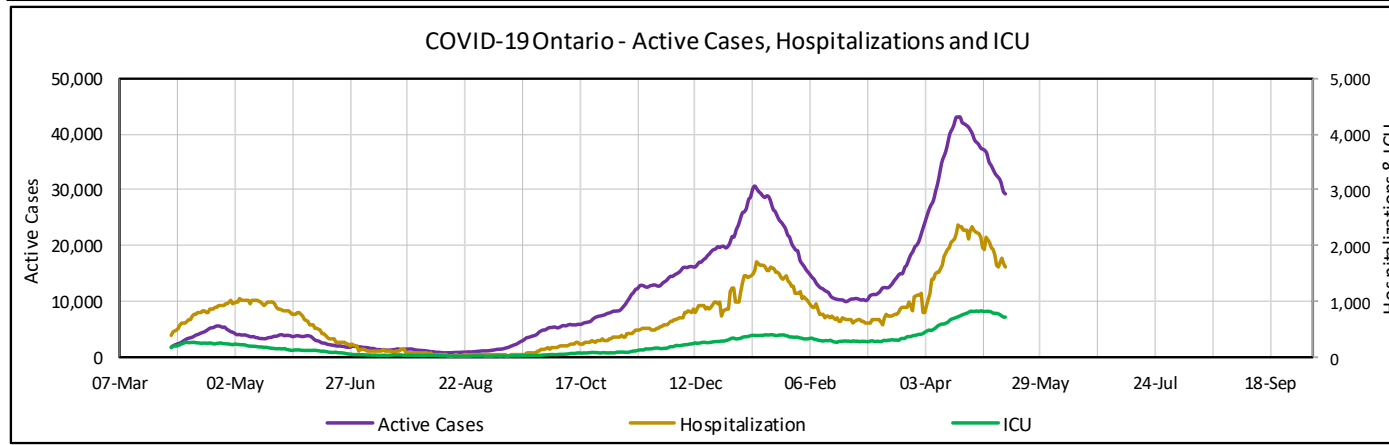
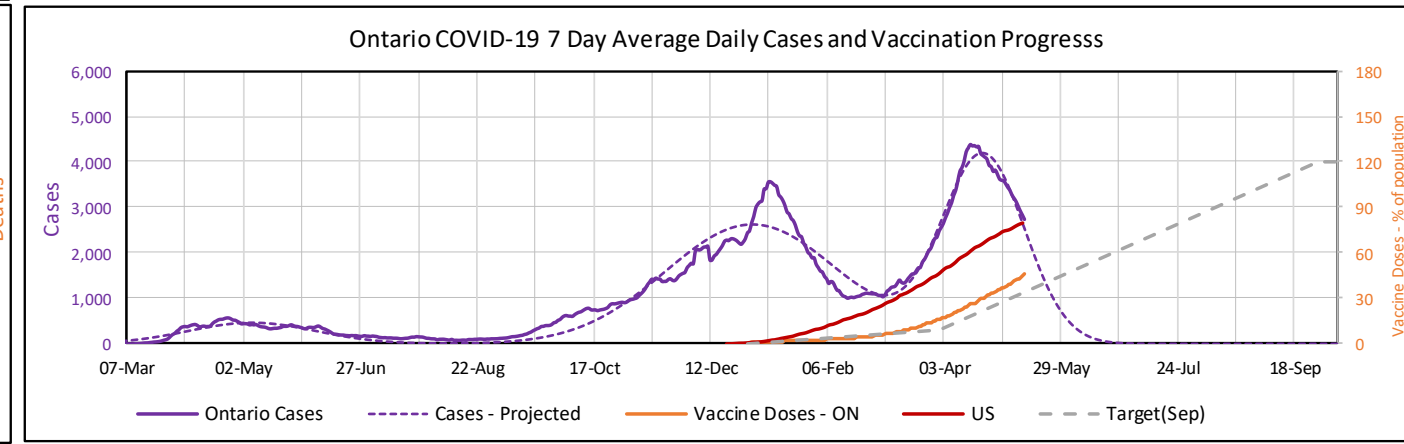
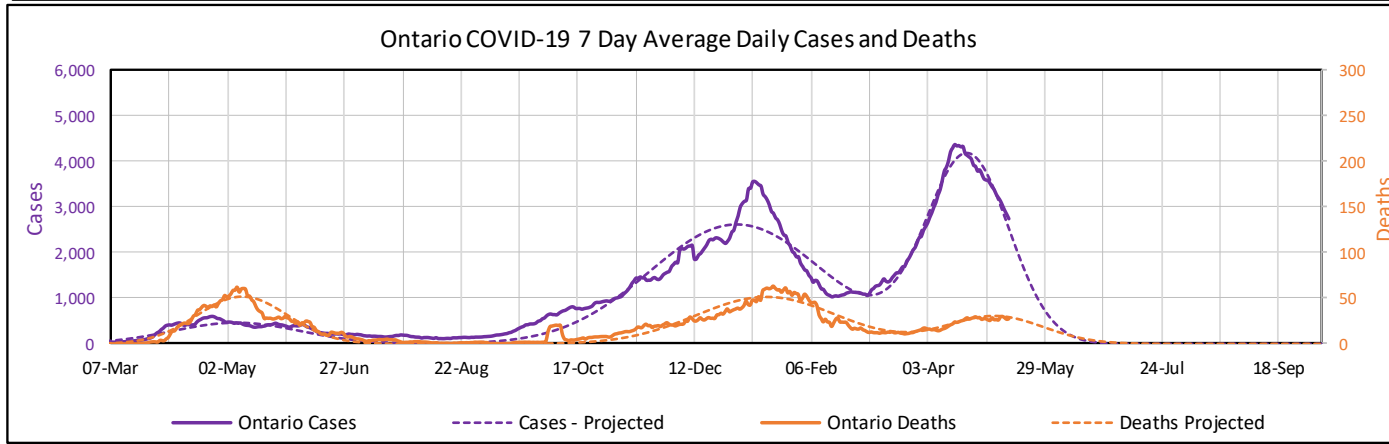
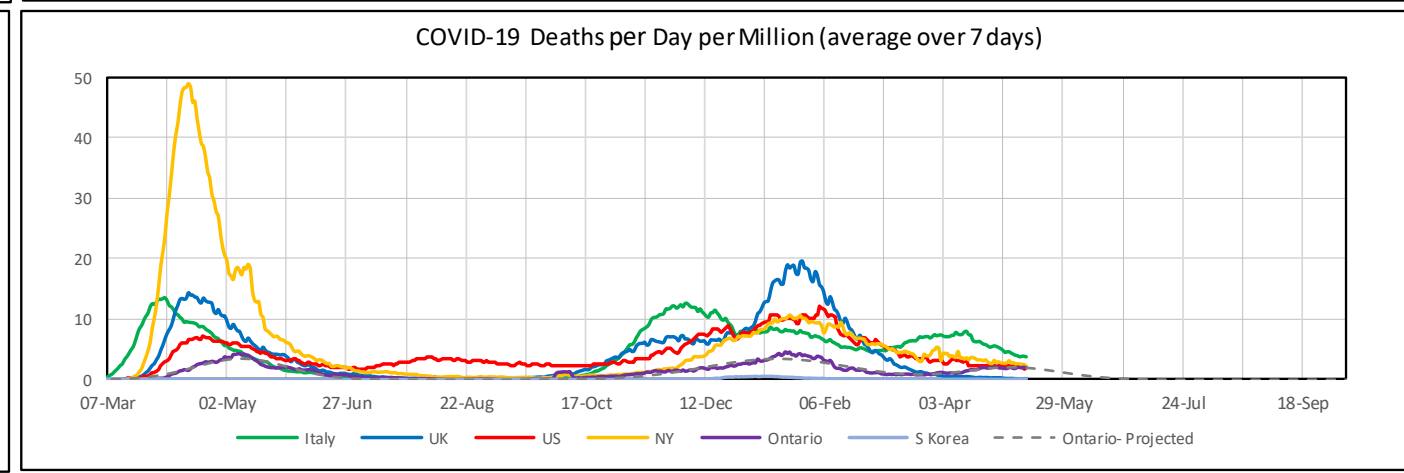
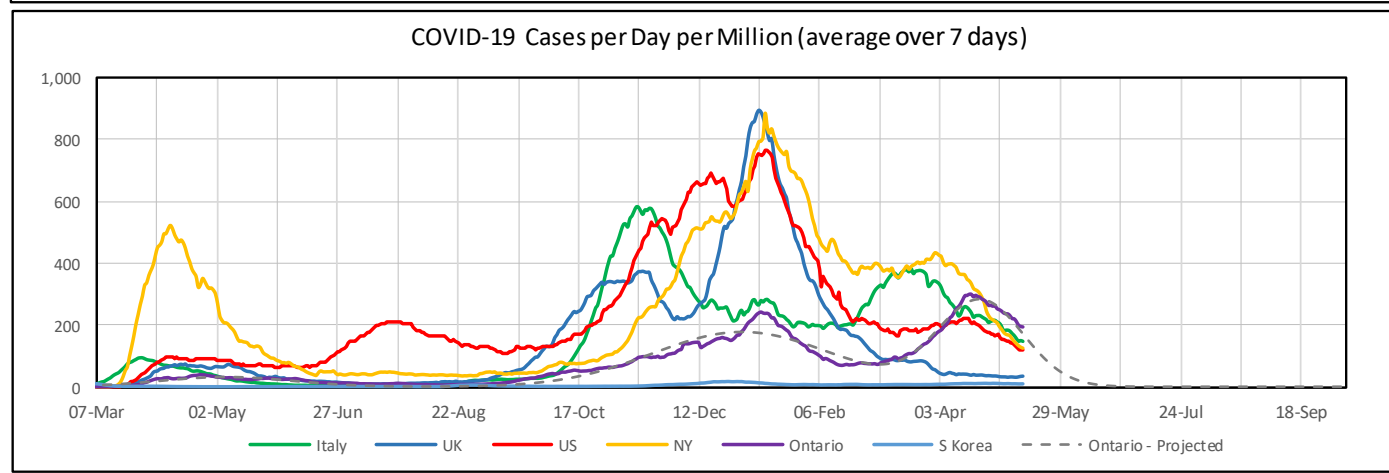
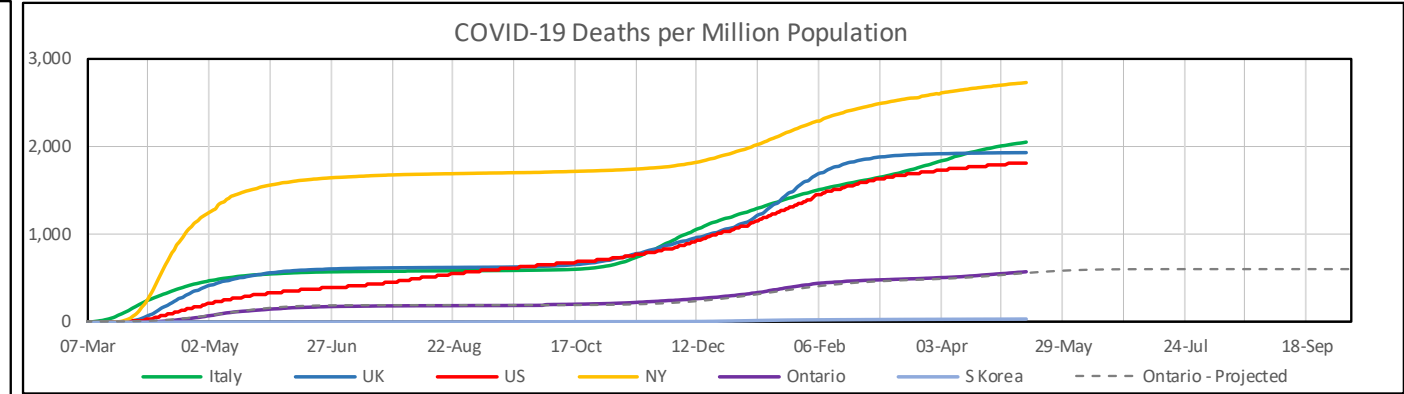
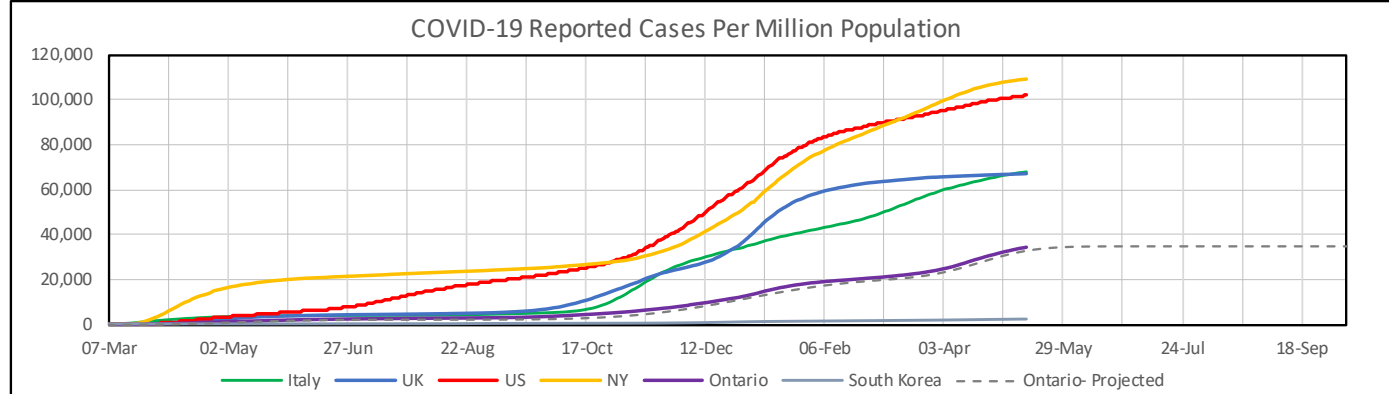


COVID-19 Observations – 13 May, 2021 – by Alex Harrington



I find there is less and less to say each week. There are only so many ways for me to counter anti vax nonsense and all the other conspiracy theory type stuff related to the pandemic. The real difficulty is that our leaders are almost as nonsensical in their actions as the wildest conspiracy theories. The federal government has failed at every step of the way. Giving our PPE to China at the start of the pandemic and then teaming up with China for vaccine development should tell you a lot about the judgement of our leadership. Our failure at vaccine acquisition and inability to close borders effectively demonstrate the systemic incompetence at the federal level. These traits of the federal government have been consistent throughout the pandemic.

Provincially it's a slightly different story. Bewilderment and disbelief typified the response at the beginning of the pandemic – we were told to go off and enjoy March break. Everyone did, and came back with covid and then it was realized that lockdown was needed. It was the only thing that could be done – we had no testing, no PPE and no idea how to deal with this virus. Since then it's been a tale of lock 'em down let 'em out, lock 'em down let 'em out, and then do it again. No one seems to be able to learn what's been effective and what hasn't from each of these cycles. They just plod along pig headedly doing much the same thing over and over.

So here we sit still locked down, and now the lockdown is extended until June 2nd. There will be no easing of outdoor restrictions, contrary to common sense and every shred of evidence available. This make no sense, but I guess that's what pig headedness is all about – you shouldn't be expecting anything to make sense any more. It's as if the provincial leadership is sitting there holding their breath with their eyes squeezed shut and their hands firmly clasped over their ears, hoping this will end before they pass out.

A look at the testing charts to the right shows the continued decline in our testing, as if we've given up trying to fight. The rapid tests I've spoken of earlier have finally been deployed to businesses that want them – hard to know how that is working because it gets such little attention. The press is quick to sensationalize risk from blood clots and every other scary or divisive aspect of the virus but slow to look objectively at where we really sit in the course of this pandemic, and what we can do to improve things. Testing - the one thing that is proactive and can make a difference and it gets ignored. The UK, by contrast, continues its aggressive testing program as its cases drop and its immunization rate climbs. The US is also seeing a significant drop in cases due largely to its immunization program. It has always eschewed testing and this was a large factor in the horror they lived through last year.

Our big success stories are at the local levels, where vaccination rates continue to climb. We are approaching the 50% vaccine dosage level – the number of doses administered is equivalent to 50% of the population. If you look at the US case and vaccination charts, you'll see that their cases started to drop when they hit the 70% mark. At our current vaccination rate, we could be there in late June. I've always avoided saying there's a light at the end of the tunnel, because most people who've said that had no clue what they were talking about or what we were in for.

But things are finally looking better. We will still have to mask and distance for the foreseeable future. We will also have to endure the ongoing incompetence of our leadership. But here's my prediction – it's worth what you paid for it. A case level of 1,000 per day is worrisome to the government – that's the level at which the health care system starts to seriously stress. This is the 7-day average – not just one day of 1,000 cases. We will have to get well below 1,000 cases per day before we see significant easing. My model shows we'll be at 1,000 cases per day just after the May 24 weekend, and a week or so after that we'll be below 500. At that time, we'll also be approaching a critical vaccine dosing level that will start impacting case numbers. Put that all together, and in early to mid June I would expect to see significant easing of restrictions. It doesn't mean this is over, but we will have reached a point where we can at least come out of hiding. Plus, we have to hope for no surprises from those nasty virus variants.

Take care of yourselves and don't endanger others.

