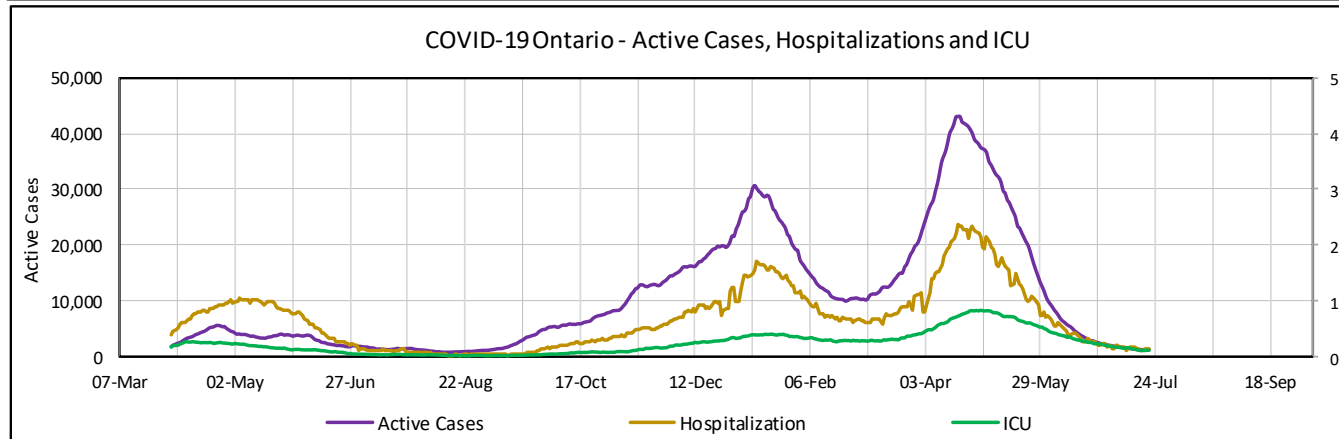
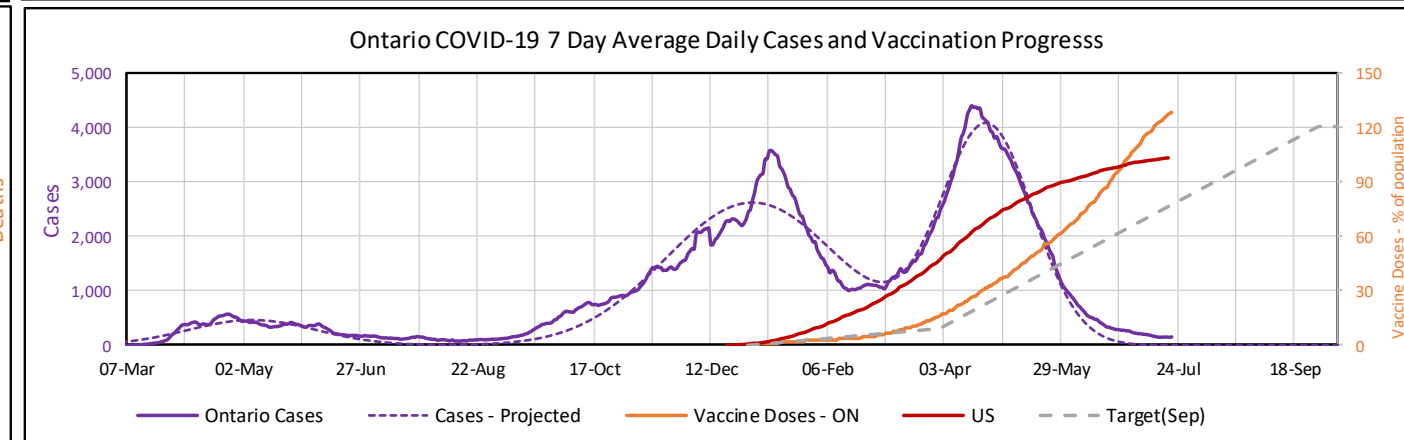
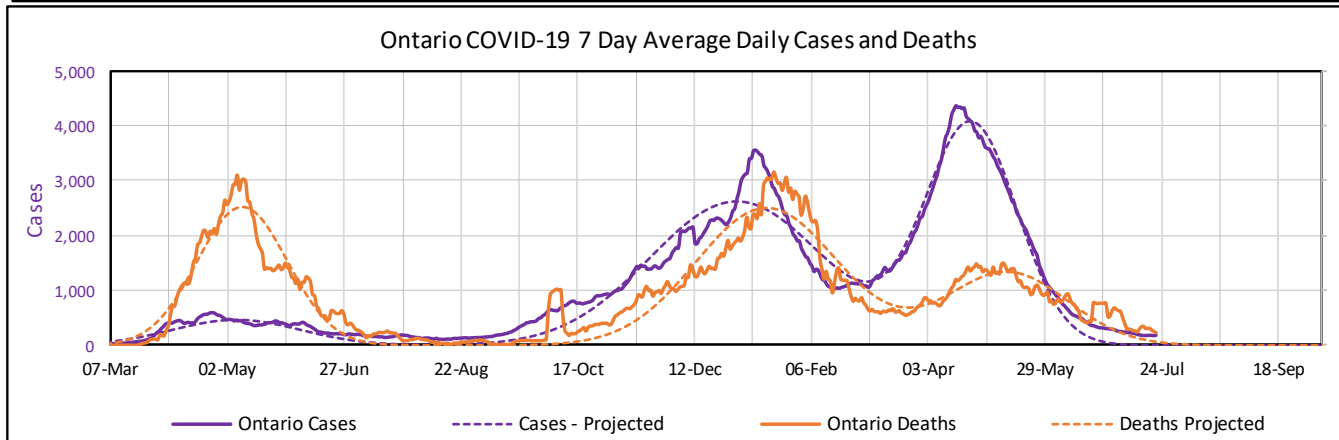
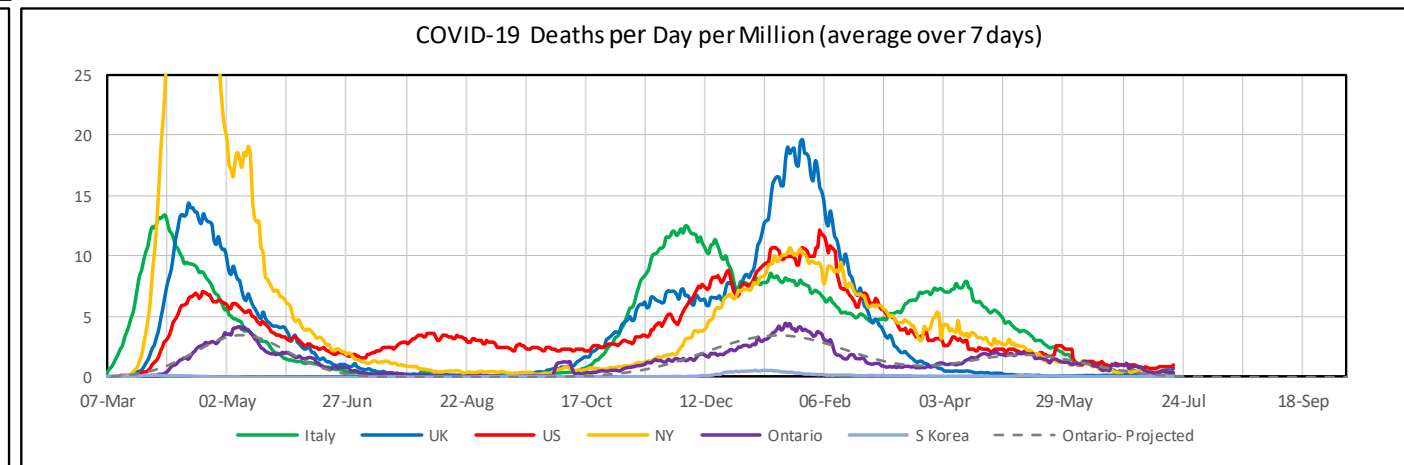
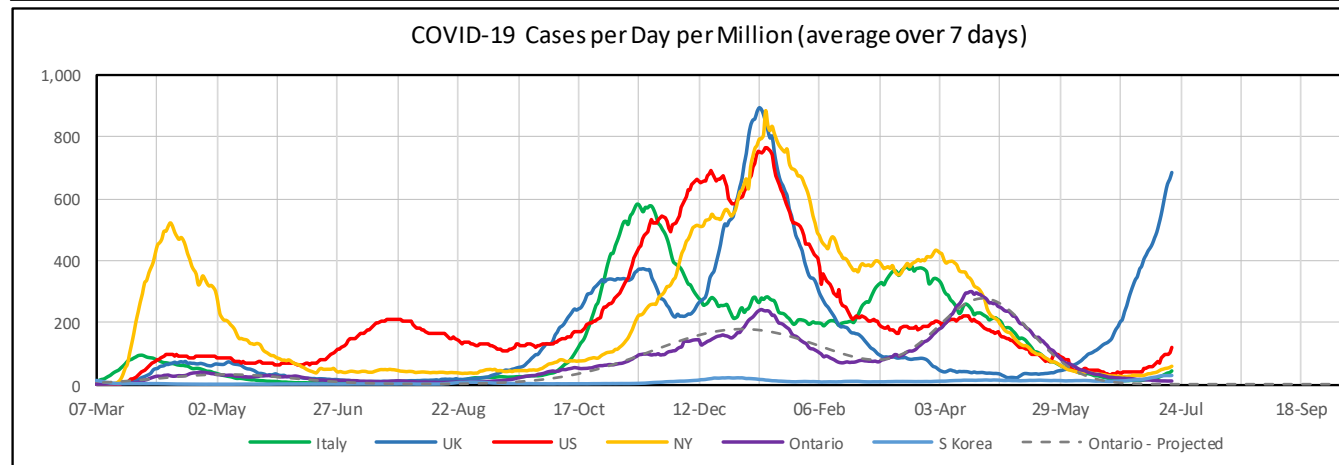
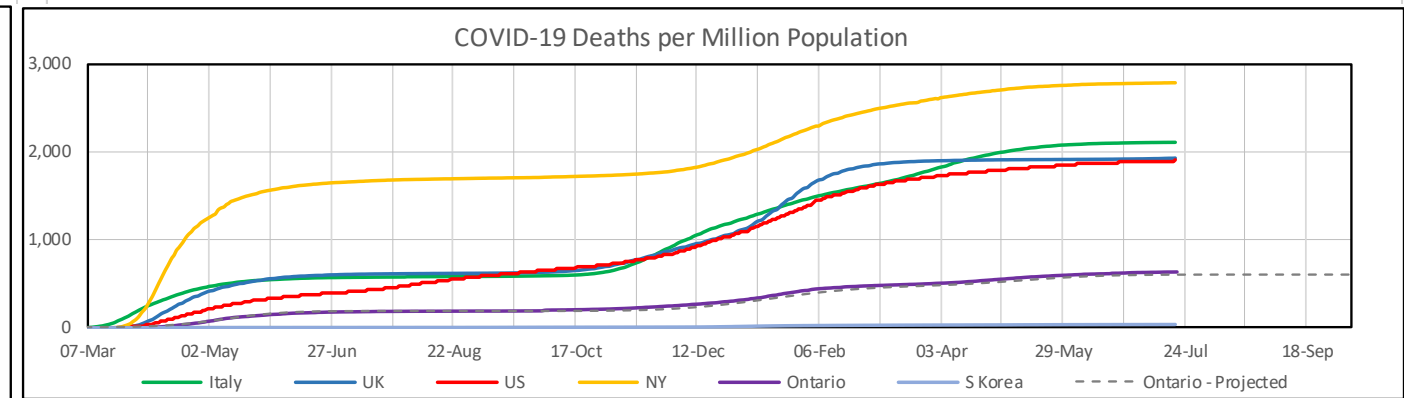
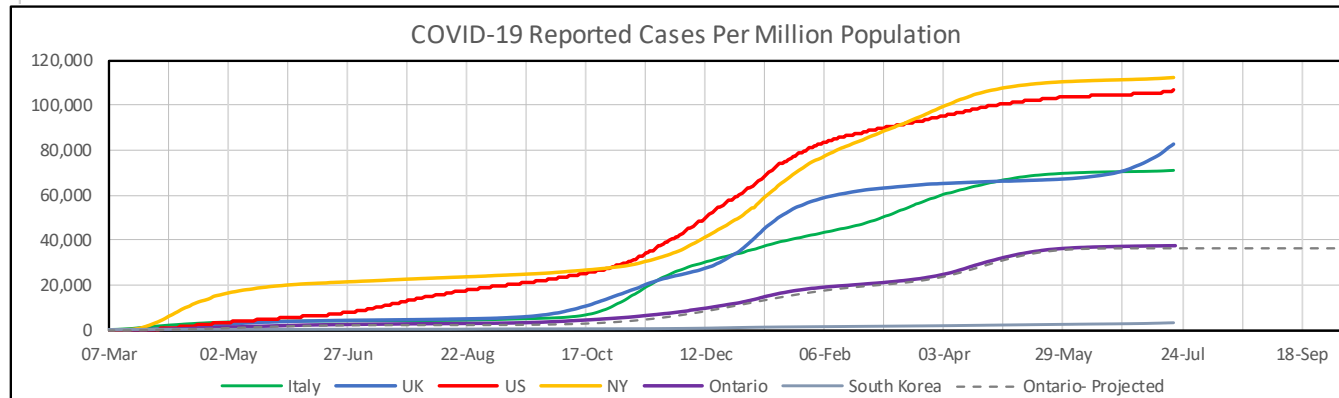


COVID-19 Observations – 22 July, 2021 – by Alex Harrington



We're over our first week of Step 3 re-opening. Many people seem to be thinking the virus is behind us and we're just a little while away from post pandemic.

Give your head a shake.

We're stalling out in our vaccination rate – down over 40% in less than a month. Countries all over the world, regardless of vaccination status, are seeing cases surge. The delta variant is the most serious right now – it is possibly the most contagious virus we've ever had to deal with, even more contagious than smallpox.

First a look at cases – the delta variant is infecting people regardless of vaccination status. In the UK, about 40% of cases are in people who have been vaccinated. That's not as bad as it might seem. In most places, the UK included, vaccine rollout was first to the most vulnerable. These people will still be vulnerable for a variety of health reasons, and if the vaccine doesn't prevent infection, it usually reduces the severity of the impact. So seeing cases in vaccinated people isn't as troubling as it might appear.

In the US, major outbreaks tend to be in areas of low vaccination rates – as low as 30% to 40%, about half the rate in the UK or Canada. The big difference is in hospitalizations. In the UK, where case rates are almost at the same level as their third wave peak last December, hospitalizations are 5 to 10 times lower than they were during the third wave. In the US, hospitals in areas with low vaccination rates are overflowing again.

The message is clear – vaccines work. This is not an earth-shattering revelation. Vaccines are what eradicated polio, smallpox and measles.

What can be done? As always, I have my solution – simple but effective. All health care workers must be vaccinated. Anyone working at any job funded in any way by public money must be vaccinated. All students from university level down must be vaccinated. Anyone working at a job that requires contact with the public must be vaccinated. Anyone not covered by these conditions and who does not have proof of vaccination must come to work early enough to take a rapid Covid test and wait for a negative result before entering the work place. This requirement is to be enforced every day, and the test is at the employee's expense.

No chance of any of that happening, even in a watered-down form. So that means we are in another one of those frustrating phases when all we can do is watch to see how it turns out. Meanwhile, you should continue to protect yourself with masking and distancing because the virus is still there.

Take care of yourselves and don't endanger others.

COVID-19 Summary Data										
	Tests per Million	Tests per Day		Tests per Reported Case		Cases per Million		Deaths per Million		Deaths Per Case
	Total to Date	Average over Last 7 days		Total	Last 7 days	Total to date	Average per day Last 7 days	Total to date	Average per day Last 7 days	Total to date (%)
South Korea	214,152	32,110	627	61	21	3,523	27.7	40	0.037	1.1%
Italy	1,235,218	183,329	3,028	17	79	70,901	43	2,112	0.2	3.0%
UK	3,447,208	1,103,417	16,608	42	23	83,066	685	1,939	0.7	2.3%
US	1,453,992	494,871	1,504	14	16	106,617	121	1,900	0.9	1.8%
Ontario	1,126,434	18,546	1,273	30	109	37,666	10	639	0.4	1.7%

South Korea and Canada report people tested. The others report total tests. Total tests can be 10-50% higher than people tested

