

Vaccination and Immunization Information

The purpose of this information is to provide Members of Council with an update on the current planning assumptions respecting the distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines in our community, as directed by the Province.

As you read through this document, please keep in mind that there are new developments emerging daily about vaccines and the federal and provincial distribution plans. The information below reflects a moment in time in an ongoing and evolving project. Please remember that we are continually monitoring for updates and aligning our planning efforts in response to new developments.

Jurisdictional Framework

The federal government has taken the lead on the approval and procurement of COVID-19 vaccines in Canada. The federal government has stood up its National Operations Centre through the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), led by Major-General Dany Fortin.

The provincial government receives COVID-19 vaccines from the federal government and is responsible for identifying priority population groups, as it distributes vaccines across Ontario. The Province is also responsible for vaccine tracking and healthcare records management and has established the provincial COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force, led by General (retired) Rick Hillier. The Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) and the Ministry of Health's Emergency Operations Centre have also been stood up.

Local hospitals and/or health units will eventually receive vaccines from the Province to administer in accordance with the provincially mandated prioritization groups.

Vaccine Approvals

Health Canada approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine on December 9, 2020, and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine on December 23, 2020. There are other potential vaccines expected to follow, including vaccine candidates from Janssen, AstraZeneca and Novavax, among others. The Public Health Agency of Canada has announced that the federal government has negotiated agreements with seven vaccine manufacturers that would provide access to COVID-19 vaccines to everyone living in Canada by September 2021.

Both the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines require two doses. Currently, the PfizerBioNTech vaccine is approved for people aged 16 and older and the Moderna vaccine is approved for people aged 18 and older. Reports have indicated that the vaccines are close to being equivalent in efficacy. Based on the data from the vaccine trials, the PfizerBioNTech and Moderna vaccines are 95 and 94.1 percent effective respectively, at preventing symptomatic COVID-19 infection, following two doses of the vaccine.

There are different cold storage requirements for both vaccines. The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine must be stored at minus 20 degrees Celsius whereas the Pfizer vaccine must be stored at minus 70 degrees Celsius. For this reason, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine requires ultra-cold freezers that public health units, doctor's offices and most pharmacies do not have. As of today, only some hospitals are equipped to store and administer the PfizerBioNTech vaccine, whereas the Moderna vaccine may be administered by

a wider range of health care providers with the acquisition of special freezers that can meet temperature storage requirements.

Vaccine Distribution

Overall, Canada has secured access to 20 million Pfizer-BioNTech doses and 40 million Moderna doses, with options to purchase more if needed. The amounts of vaccines and delivery dates to our area have not been established yet. These decisions are made by the Province.

Various tactics will be used to distribute and administer vaccines throughout our area based on the quantity and type of vaccines received throughout 2021. The main tactics that will be used include hospital clinics, mobile vaccination teams, community clinics, pharmacies, primary health care providers like family doctors and by other health care professionals such as nurses working in congregate living settings, including long-term care homes.

Provincial Timeline

The table below outlines the three phases that the Province has announced for the rollout of vaccines in Ontario. The Province has also announced that public health units should be prepared to convert flu clinics under Phase 2 of the rollout. These timelines are subject to change based on the supply/availability of vaccines.

Phases	Phase 1: Starting Dec. 15, 2020	Phase 2: Starting Winter 2021	Phase 3 When supply allows
Population Groups	Limited doses of the vaccine available for health care workers in hospitals, long-term care homes and retirement homes, other congregate care settings and remote Indigenous communities	Increasing stock of vaccines, available to all health care workers, residents in long-term care homes, retirement homes, home care patients with chronic conditions and additional Indigenous communities	Vaccines available widely across Ontario for anyone who wants to be immunized

Phase 1 and Pilot Phase

Canada expects to receive a combined total of six million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for distribution in the first quarter of 2021 - enough for three million Canadians to be vaccinated with the recommended two-doses. The three main tactics that will be used in Phase 1 include hospital clinics, mobile vaccination teams and nursing staff working in congregate living settings for seniors. The Province recently announced that 17 hospitals in Ontario would be open in clinics with more hospitals to follow. Each hospital will be responsible for the storage and administration of the vaccines they receive. Given the cold chain requirements of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, and that it cannot currently be moved from the site where it is received, health care workers from long-term care and retirement homes, as well as essential caregivers, it is expected that people will need to travel to receive this vaccine. With Health Canada's approval of the Moderna vaccine, the ability to immunize seniors living in specified congregate settings will exist once supply is received from the Province. Our

area is not expected to receive the initial doses of Moderna, which will go to harder-hit areas of the province and remote northern communities.

Phase 2

For the second quarter of 2021, Ontario expects to receive a combined total of approximately 15 million doses. This is enough for an additional 7.5 million Ontarians to be fully vaccinated. On a per capita basis, an allocation model which has not been confirmed by the Province, The four main tactics that will be used in Phase 2 include an expansion on hospital clinics, mobile vaccination teams, launching community clinics and pharmacies. Distribution of vaccines to pharmacies across Ontario will be contingent on the Province. Some pharmacies have existing infrastructure and capacity to immunize residents and are well distributed across our area to make a significant contribution to support vaccination efforts.

Phase 3

If our area receives the estimated doses from now until August 2021, by Phase 3 we could potentially return to a steady state with regular vaccination delivery mechanisms, such as through flu clinics, pharmacies, and primary health care providers.

Key Considerations

The Province has noted that this will be the “largest vaccine rollout in a generation”. The vaccine logistics and distribution processes are complex, and we are collaborating with public health experts and industry partners, such as the hospitals, to ensure vaccines are administered in a way that is timely, efficient and safe. There are many logistical challenges to consider, including but not limited to:

- Staff scheduling
- Client booking
- Transportation
- Supply Management (e.g. clinical supplies, personal protective equipment, etc.)
- Clinic technology and data management
- Vaccine storage, handling and distribution
- Security

The above-noted considerations will be factored into the different phases through the rollout of the vaccines.

Municipal Involvement

As the vaccines become available in our area, there will be some decisions that municipalities need to make and actions to take, such as:

- Will all, none, or certain groups (i.e. firefighters, front office workers) of municipal employees be required to be vaccinated? If required which groups first, which groups last?
- What support can municipalities provide to public health to support mass immunization clinics (community halls for clinics, staff support, messaging to the public, etc.)?
- As immunization numbers rise and COVID case numbers falls, when and how will the municipality return to ‘normal’?

- If there are no clinics in our municipality will council push to have a clinic?
- If there are no clinics in our municipality will the municipality provide transportation or other support to get people to clinics?
- Are there any marginalized populations in our municipality that will need support in getting vaccinated, regardless of where the immunization clinics are located?