

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to foster alignment related to COVID-19 Vaccination for Health Professional Learners across Toronto Region Hospitals and Educational Institutions.

BACKGROUND

On December 9th, 2020, Health Canada approved the Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine, shortly followed by approval of the Moderna Vaccine on December 23rd. These COVID-19 Vaccines were authorized after being reviewed for safety, efficacy, and quality.

Guided by [Ontario's Ethical Framework for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution](#), the Ministry of Health developed [Ontario's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Implementation Plan](#), a phased approach to vaccine distribution, with identification of key populations within each phase to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. In December, distribution of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine began to select hospital sites in Grey Lockdown and Red-Control zones, with plans to expand to approximately 21 hospital vaccination clinics across the province in the early 2021.

Hospitals with vaccination clinics will be partnered with other hospitals, long term care and community settings to ensure scaling of the vaccine to all healthcare workers in Ontario, defined as “any regulated health professional, and any staff member, contract worker, student/trainee, registered volunteer, or other essential caregiver currently working in a healthcare organization”, (Ontario Health, COVID-19: Guidance for Prioritizing Health Care Workers for COVID-19 Vaccination, 2021).

A stepwise approach for prioritization of healthcare workers is being used by the province, initially focused on those working in high-risk settings and services, such as hospital COVID units and ICUs, Long Term Care Homes, among others, local and community factors and individual risk. As these priority areas are completed, expansion to broader healthcare workers in hospitals and community care settings is beginning. This process is stepwise by service/setting, and not specific to a single discipline. For example, all healthcare workers in an ICU, including nurses, physicians, learners, etc., are deemed priority due to their clinical service.

Learners provide care across a multitude of clinical services during their educational training. Depending on their competency level, they may engage in the full spectrum of care, including caring for COVID+ patients. As COVID-19 vaccination roll out expands, there is an opportunity to ensure learners are captured in the roll out process.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles support alignment for learners related to vaccination for COVID-19 for phase 1 and 2 (prior to public distribution).

1. Hospitals and Educational Institutions must adhere to all applicable local, provincial, and federal public health guidelines, directions from Ontario Health and the Ministry of Health.
2. Hospitals and Educational Institutions should leverage [Ontario's Ethical Framework for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution](#) to guide decision making and ensure fair and equitable processes.
3. COVID-19 immunization is strongly recommended for all staff, physicians, and learners, however, remains voluntary at this time.
4. As healthcare workers, access and administration of COVID-19 vaccines should be aligned across staff, physicians, and learners of all professions.
5. Learners often have multi-site rotations/placements during their educational training. If a vaccination clinic* provides an initial dose of the vaccine, it should also provide the second dose of the vaccine to ensure vaccination requirements (i.e., 2 doses) are met.

N.B. Please note that this document is only providing guidance and/or recommendations to support individual planning for hospitals within the Toronto Region of Ontario Health. This document does not constitute provincial decisions, directions or guidance.

Suggested Guidance For Learners

- a. Learners should register for vaccination appointments once directed by their **primary rotation/placement clinical site only**. Learners will receive communications with instructions on how and when to book appointments through their primary clinical site.
- b. To ensure fairness and equitable access to the vaccine across healthcare workers, **learners should not register for multiple appointments at multiple vaccine clinics**.
- c. Learners who chose to be vaccinated should maintain proof of vaccination as this may be required for potential future Occupational Health & Safety assessments (e.g., if a learner is involved in a unit that goes into outbreak).
- d. Learners should always self-monitor for symptoms and should immediately report any symptoms to their clinical supervisor, and/or the process defined through their primary rotation/placement.

*[Select hospitals](#) have been mandated by the Ministry of Health as “vaccination clinics” for the COVID-19 vaccine. As broader roll out to healthcare workers begins, these sites are partnered with hospitals, long term care and community settings to ensure all healthcare workers can access the vaccine, should they wish.

FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

- Consideration of mechanism to ensure learner population is captured as COVID-19 vaccine roll out continues (i.e., who and how many have been offered the option).
- Exploration of opportunities for education for learners related to the COVID-19 vaccine.
- For Educational Institutions: Consideration of if/how to track COVID-19 vaccine completion for learners.

REFERENCES

Government of Ontario (2021). [COVID-19 Vaccination Update - Technical Briefing January 5 2021](#)

Government of Ontario (2020). [Ontario’s Vaccine Distribution Implementation Plan, December 11 2020](#).

Government of Ontario: [COVID-19 Vaccines for Ontario](#)

Government of Canada: [COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

Government of Canada: [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine: What you should know](#)

Ontario Health. (2021). COVID-19: Guidance for Prioritizing Health Care Workers for COVID-19 Vaccination”

Ontario Human Rights Commission (2020). [Policy statement on a human rights-based approach to managing the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

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