

COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #14

Clarification about Next Steps for Groups Eligible in Phase 2

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Hospital CEOs, Hospital Laboratories, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse Practitioners, EMS, Designated Officers, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies, Central LHIN, NSM LHIN, Beausoleil First Nation, Moose Deer Point First Nation, Rama First Nation, Wahta First Nation, Long-term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Hospices, Coroners, Funeral Directors, Dentists, Group Homes, Homes for Special Care, Optometrists, Corrections

Date: April 14, 2021

Clarification About Next Steps for Groups Eligible in Phase 2

It is important to note that many new larger groups are included in Phase 2 and while they will all become eligible locally over the coming months, unfortunately this does not mean all of these groups are eligible to get vaccinated right now. We are still needing to work through these groups in a sequenced fashion based on vaccine supply. Essential caregivers who are eligible will be immunized at the same time as the person they care for in most cases.

Phase 2 groups include the following:

- Older adults 60 years of age and older
- Individuals with health conditions – prioritized in three groups: Highest risk, High risk and At risk
- High risk congregate living settings – this includes settings where people live or stay overnight and use shared spaces (e.g. common sleeping areas, shared bathrooms, shared kitchens, communal dining spaces) and includes settings like supportive housing, group homes, shelters, etc.
- COVID-19 hot spot communities – in Simcoe Muskoka this includes the L3Z postal code area of Bradford West Gwillimbury and currently includes residents who are 50 years of age and older
- Essential workers who cannot work from home – this group will not be eligible until later in Phase 2 which is likely to be in June

Anyone 60 years and older – can book directly on the provincial booking system or can receive AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine from their primary care provider or a local pharmacy.

Health Conditions and Eligible Caregivers – local hospitals in partnership with local primary care providers are **starting** to identify and immunize those in the Highest Risk health conditions group (organ transplant



recipients, Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant (HSCT) recipients, those with neurological diseases which impact respiratory function, those with hematological malignancy in last year, and those with kidney disease with eGFR less than 30) and their essential caregivers. For some this will mean a clinic at their hospital when attending other appointments, and for others they will be booked for a designated clinic. Some hospitals are also immunizing some of those in the High-Risk health conditions group, specifically patients receiving chemotherapy.

Anyone with a Highest or High-Risk health condition living in the Barrie area that does not have access to the vaccine through their current provider can register at <https://www.rvh.on.ca/vaccine/Pages/default.aspx>.

Once local hospitals have immunized those from the Highest and High-Risk health conditions groups that they can identify and reach, we will then open our community clinic registration to anyone remaining in those groups, followed later by the At-Risk health conditions group. Highest and High-Risk community clinic eligibility will coincide with the opening of our next grouping of appointment bookings for mid-May to mid-June, which are anticipated to be added to the provincial booking system later in April. Individuals will not be required to provide documentation of their medical condition, but will be asked to attest to having an eligible condition.

High Risk Congregate Living Setting Residents and Eligible Caregivers – the health unit has **started** outreach and immunization in our Highest Risk congregate settings. We are currently working with our partners in congregate settings to plan for vaccination of their residents, remaining staff and essential caregivers, which includes a variety of options from mobile clinics, designated times at our community clinics and having residents come to community clinics whenever possible.

We have added resident, staff, or essential caregiver of a congregate setting to the list of who can register for our community clinics, if that setting is feasible for them. For congregate settings, essential caregivers are those identified through an organization's caregiver definition, or where no policy or definition is in place, assumes primary individuals providing direct, frequent and sustained in-person personal care and/or assistance with activities of daily living to a resident of a congregate living setting.

COVID-19 Hot Spot – Bradford West Gwillimbury (L3Z postal code area)

In Simcoe Muskoka, the province has designated the area of Bradford West Gwillimbury (with postal starting with L3Z) as a Hot Spot, or priority community, based on ongoing higher rates of COVID-19 transmission, hospitalization, and death. As such, adults age 50 years and over (born in 1971 and earlier) in that community are now eligible to be vaccinated. They can book directly on the provincial booking system for community clinics, and additional opportunities for vaccination are being arranged in collaboration with local health and community partners.

For more detailed information about Phase 2 of the provincial vaccination rollout, please refer to the [Guidance for Prioritization of Phase 2 Populations for COVID-19 Vaccination](#).

Clinics for Special Education Staff

In response to the provincial announcement last week that special education staff are now eligible to receive vaccine, we have scheduled 4 dedicated clinics for special education staff during the school spring break to facilitate immunization of those staff who are eligible. All clinics are by appointment only. Staff who

are eligible have been provided notice and information about how to book an appointment by their school board. If the designated dates and times do not work or the appointments are all booked, staff can also contact the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at **1-888-999-6488** to book an appointment at one of SMDHU's community clinics. There is currently limited appointment availability from April 18 – May 14, but an additional block of appointments will be added beyond that in the coming weeks. Eligible staff will be provided with a proof of employment letter from their school board, which they will be required to show at their immunization clinic appointment.

Last week's provincial announcement referenced teachers who live and work in Hot Spot areas also being eligible for vaccination, but this is starting in a phased approach with teachers in Peel and Toronto first. When this rolls out to our area we will provide an update.

2nd Dose Interval for AstraZeneca COVID-19 Vaccine

For those who are to receive their 2nd dose of COVID-19 at the product monograph interval (transplant recipients, and those individuals with malignant hematologic disorders and non-hematologic malignant solid tumors receiving stable, active treatment), for AstraZeneca this interval should be 12 weeks. While the product monograph indicated 4 to 12 weeks, evidence for this vaccine has shown a stronger immune response at 12 weeks vs. 4 weeks.

For more information about the rollout of COVID-19 vaccine in our area, please refer to the [SMDHU COVID-19 Vaccine and Immunization Webpages](#).

Additional Information

For more information on the province's three-phased vaccine distribution implementation plan, please visit [COVID-19 vaccines for Ontario](#).

There are a number of COVID-19 resources and documents available through our Health Professional Portal at www.smdhu.org/hpportal as well as through [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Government of Ontario](#).