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COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #13

Appointments Open for 60+ Years, More Essential Caregivers Eligible, and Phase 2 Rollout Continues to Highest and High Risk Health Conditions

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 7, 2021

Anyone 60+ years of age (born 1961 or earlier) living in Simcoe Muskoka can now book an appointment to receive their COVID-19 vaccine at a community clinic directly using the provincial booking system.

Clinics in Simcoe Muskoka are now booked until April 17th, but appointments from April 18 to May 14th have been added. Appointments will continue to be added approximately one month in advance so if appointments book up, people are encouraged to check back.

Alternatively, people 55+ can also access the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine from a [local pharmacy](#). Some primary care providers in our area also have the vaccine available and will reach out to their eligible patients to book an appointment to receive the vaccine. We will have additional AstraZeneca vaccine available for primary care providers in Simcoe Muskoka in the coming days. For primary care providers who have not yet received AstraZeneca vaccine to administer in their practice and are interested in doing so, please refer to our [website](#) for more details about how to access vaccine supply.

We are in the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and it is a threat in our communities. The quicker people are protected with vaccination, the sooner our communities will be protected, and we can bring the pandemic under control. **While there are various vaccines available in various settings, the best vaccine is the vaccine that is available to you first.**

Moving into Phase 2 of the COVID-19 Vaccination Provincial Framework

As we begin to move into Phase 2 of the provincial framework for COVID-19 vaccination, we will be continuing to offer our mass immunization clinics for age-based groups and other groups eligible to register



on SMDHU’s website, as well as starting to immunize a number of priority groups in other venues. Immunization of the priority groups listed in the figure below will be done in partnership with hospital and primary care providers, and through mobile immunization clinics. It is important to note that it is expected that this phase will take from now until the end of June to complete, and is dependent on vaccine supply, so we appreciate everyone’s ongoing patience as we move through the various groups.

Provincial Overview of Phase 2

Overview of Phase Two

Projected Phase Two sequencing April to June (see table below)

		Phase 2		
		April	May	June
Older Adults	Over 75			
	Over 70			
	Over 65			
	Over 60			
Health Conditions	Individuals with Health Conditions			
	Highest Risk & Caregivers	High Risk & Certain Caregivers	At-Risk Health Conditions	
Congregate Settings	High Risk Congregate Settings			
Hot Spots	COVID-19 Hot Spots Communities			
	Highest Risk Communities	Remaining Hot Spots Communities		
Cannot-Work-From-Home				Essential Workers who cannot work from home
			Group 1	Group 2

Health Conditions

Highest Risk Health Conditions include the following:

- Organ transplant recipients
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients
- Neurological diseases in which respiratory function may be compromised (e.g., motor neuron disease, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis)
- Haematological malignancy diagnosed less than 1 year
- Kidney disease eGFR less than 30

High-Risk Health Conditions include the following:

- Obesity (BMI greater than 40)
- Other treatments causing immunosuppression (e.g., chemotherapy)
- Intellectual or developmental disabilities (e.g., Down Syndrome)

Local hospitals, in collaboration with primary care teams, are currently working to identify and immunize Highest Risk patients followed by chemotherapy patients from the High Risk group, along with eligible essential caregivers (see below). In the coming weeks, any remaining people in the Highest and High Risk

groups and their caregivers will also be added to the eligibility groups for our community clinics, and we will notify you at that time. Patients will be asked to self-attest as belonging to one of the categories, with no documentation required. After those groups are completed, we will open eligibility to the much larger group of At-Risk patients (see the Ministry's [Guidance for Prioritization of Phase 2 Populations for COVID-19 Vaccination](#) for the complete list).

Additional Essential Caregivers are Now Eligible

An essential caregiver is someone providing direct, frequent, and sustained in person personal care and/or assistance with activities of daily living to the individual.

The following essential caregivers are now eligible to receive the vaccine. This would typically be administered at the time of the eligible patient/resident:

- For those with Highest Risk Health Conditions – up to one essential caregiver
- For those with High Risk Health Conditions - up to one primary essential caregiver for those who require regular and sustained assistance with personal care and/or activities of daily living
- Essential Caregivers are included for the following congregate settings: developmental services, mental health and addictions congregate settings, homes for special care, children's residential facilities, and Indigenous healing and wellness facilities

Hot Spots

In Simcoe Muskoka, the province has identified the area of Bradford East (with L3Z start to postal code) 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 will be eligible to be vaccinated in the coming weeks. Specific opportunities for vaccination will be arranged in collaboration with local health and community partners.

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/hportal as well as through [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Government of Ontario](#).