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COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #31

Mass Immunization Clinic Ramp Down and Role of Primary Care in Sustainable Access to Vaccination

Attention: Physicians, Emergency Departments, Hospital CEOs, Hospital Laboratories, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Practitioners, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse and 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, Municipalities, Licensed Child Care Providers

Date: July 21, 2021

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Vaccine Coverage Update

With vaccine having been offered for some time now to all Simcoe Muskoka residents 12 years of age and older, the vaccination campaign will be shifting into the next phase of the province's COVID-19 Vaccine Plan which is ongoing availability of vaccine. As we transition to this phase, mass immunization clinics will be coming to a close at the end of August.

While vaccine coverage rates are high in Simcoe and Muskoka at 77% for dose 1 and 57% for dose 2 (ages 12 years and over), local data shows that there remains a number of groups that continue to have lower coverage rates including:

- Youth age 12 - 17 and young adults age 18 - 29
- Males age 18 - 59 are lower than females
- The communities of Muskoka Lakes, Gravenhurst, Clearview, Essa, Adjala-Tosorontio, Innisfil, Tiny, Ramara and Severn
- Lower socio-economic status neighborhoods and higher diversity neighborhoods
- Newcomers and recent immigrants
- Those with the following conditions: pregnant individuals, substance use disorders, and severe mental illness

Additional detail is available the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's [HealthSTATS](#) website.

We encourage all health care providers working with the above lower coverage populations to look for opportunities to discuss and/or offer vaccination to them.



Those individuals who have not yet been fully vaccinated will be able to continue to access COVID-19 vaccination once mass immunization clinics close as follows:

- 29 Sperling Drive Immunization Clinic – this clinic will continue to operate until the end of September.
- Pharmacies – over 130 pharmacies across Simcoe and Muskoka are now offering mRNA vaccine. Pharmacies are a convenient way to access vaccine, with many offering evening and weekend availability and some now offering walk ins.
- Primary care providers – a number of primary care providers in Simcoe Muskoka are offering mRNA vaccine, and we are encouraging all others to come onboard.
- Ongoing targeted outreach – public health in partnership with community partners will continue to provide immunization via mobile clinics and outreach to hard to reach populations.
- Routine public health immunization clinics – we hope to resume our routine immunization clinics in all of our health unit offices in September and will have some capacity in those clinics to offer COVID-19 vaccine.

Provision of COVID-19 Vaccine Through Primary Care and Other Health Care Providers

We are asking all primary care providers who are not yet offering COVID-19 vaccine in their practice, to strongly consider doing so as soon as possible. We would also welcome those health care providers who serve the lower coverage populations outlined above that have the means to provide vaccination to also do so (i.e. obstetricians, those providing service to those with substance use disorders or severe mental illness). Modelling has showed that in order to prevent a fourth wave of COVID-19, we need to achieve at least a 90% vaccine coverage rate of the whole population for herd immunity, given the predominance of the transmissible Delta variant currently. For many people who are hesitant to be vaccinated against COVID-19, a strong recommendation with the opportunity to be vaccinated by their primary care provider will be the key to them being vaccinated.

All primary care providers who work in Patient Enrollment Models (i.e. FHG, FHN, FHO) now have access to the COVaxON Aggregate Primary Care Vaccination Report through their ONE@ID account which identifies their rostered patients that have received a COVID-19 vaccine. We would encourage all family physicians working in a Patient Enrollment Model to refer to the memo sent by Ontario Health on July 15, 2021 for more details on this report, tools available to support practices and how to access the information.

In addition to this list of historic immunization information, providers who have access to Hospital Reports Manager (HRM) should also be receiving immunization information automatically for any patients whose primary care provider is captured in COVaxON who were immunized from May 18, 2021 onward.

The following steps are required to provide COVID-19 vaccine and public health is here to support you in onboarding with this process:

- Have staff trained and given access to the COVaxON system (the provincial documentation system for all COVID-19 vaccine)
- Store, handle and administer the vaccine in accordance with
 - [Ministry of Health Administration of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
 - [Ministry of health Administration of Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- Sign off on a standard agreement with public health
- Order and pick up vaccine as per usual ordering process at your local public health unit office

Clinical supplies (needles, alcohol swabs, cotton, PPE, sharps containers) will be provided with each vaccine order.

Physicians may use billing codes G593/Q593 when administering COVID-19 vaccine in their practices. For detailed instructions on how to use these billing codes, please see [Ministry INFOBulletin](#) on this topic. Physicians with questions pertaining to the submission of these billing codes should contact the ministry's Service Support Contact Centre by email at SSContactCentre.MOH@ontario.ca

Primary care providers can now access both Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine through public health to administer in their practice. Both of these vaccines are mRNA vaccines with similar efficacy and safety profiles. While they are stored until use in the frozen state and are sensitive to movement, they can be moved one time in the thawed state with appropriate precautions (from PHU office to Primary care practice) and then stored in the facility's regular vaccine fridge as per the table below:

Pfizer BioNTech Vaccine	Moderna Vaccine
12 years and older	18 years and older
Dose = 0.3 mL	Dose = 0.5 mL
6 dose vial – must be reconstituted with provided diluent	14 dose vial – no reconstitution required
Unpunctured vials stable in fridge for up to 31 days	Unpunctured vials stable in fridge for up to 30 days
Once reconstituted the vial is stable for 6 hours	Once punctured the vial is stable for 24 hours
2 doses given at least 21 days apart	2 doses given at least 28 days apart

We recognize that it can be challenging to utilize a full vial within the timelines outlined above, while ensuring that every opportunity to ensure people who want to and are willing to be vaccinated are in a timely way, especially as more and more people are vaccinated. We would encourage providers to work together to utilize vaccine supply as best they can to ensure any wastage is minimized as much as possible, while not missing opportunities to vaccinate patients.

A new [COVID-19 Vaccine Order Form](#) is available on our website. All of the standard ordering and pick up processes apply:

- Place orders by 3:00 p.m. Thursday for pick up the following Tuesday morning.
- Four weeks of temperature logs must be submitted with each order.
- Vaccine will be available for pick up at your local public health office from 8:30a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday (Branch offices closed from 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. for lunch daily)

Resources Available for Youth

The upcoming school year and the province's gradual reopening, in combination with the presence of the Delta variant in certain regions, make the vaccination of youth more important than ever. Vaccinating youth is integral to Ontario's overall vaccine strategy as it not only provides greater protection to the broader community, but also serves as an important step in getting children back to the activities that are fundamental to their growth and development – namely in-person learning, extra-curriculars, and time with their friends and family.

Primary care providers have a key role to play in outreach and education of youth and families in their communities, for example, with regards to the importance of getting vaccinated and addressing concerns related to getting vaccinated. To support these efforts, [a number of resources](#) have been developed that include guidance on vaccine safety, best practices, and FAQs for caregivers and healthcare providers.

At this time, youth 12 years of age and older are eligible for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. While clinical trials are currently under way in those younger than 12 years of age, there currently is not a COVID-19 vaccine approved for use in this group. When a COVID-19 vaccine is available for children under 12 years of age, public health will work with all community partners to implement a multi-faceted vaccination campaign to reach this population (i.e. clinics offered in partnership with school partners, in addition to access via primary care and pharmacies).

For immunization program information, support materials and forms refer to our website

www.smdhu.org/pcportal or call the Immunization program, Monday thru Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at 705-721-7520 or toll free 1-877-721-7520 ext. 8806.

Additional COVID-19 Vaccine Information

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

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](#).