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## COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #48

### Fourth Doses for Long-Term Care Home, Retirement Home, Elder Care Lodge and Other Seniors Congregate Setting Residents

**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:** January 6, 2022

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As per the [provincial announcement](#) on December 30, 2021 based on recommendation from the Ontario Immunization Advisory Committee, **all residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges and other seniors congregate care settings are now eligible for a fourth dose of COVID-19 vaccine at a three month (84 day) interval from their third dose.**

Local facilities that were eligible as *other seniors congregate care setting* during previous rounds of vaccination will be contacted by public health in the coming weeks to review options for provision of fourth doses for their residents.

The Ministry of Health has indicated that given the changes in the immune response that occur with age, and the fact that third doses were offered 3-4 months ago to boost protection, there is a possibility that protection has decreased again and that a fourth dose of vaccine will help increase levels of immune protection once again. Although Health Canada has not yet authorized fourth doses, the provincial recommendation is made based on expert opinion. Israel has also recently started giving fourth doses of COVID-19 vaccine to all adults over 60 years of age to help protect them against the Omicron strain of COVID-19.

Any mRNA vaccine product is acceptable as a fourth dose, although data suggest that Moderna (Spikevax™) COVID-19 vaccine may provide a more robust humoral and cellular immune response. As per the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#), those living in seniors congregate settings should receive the full 0.5 mL (100 mcg) dose of Moderna (Spikevax™) COVID-19 vaccine.



Due to current supply limitations, Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is currently only available in Ontario for those under 30 years of age.

The province is also mandating third doses for all long-term care home staff, students, volunteers, caregivers and support workers by January 28, 2022 for those currently eligible for a booster, and will be requiring visitors to provide proof of a booster dose once the temporary pause on general visitors is lifted. Staff and caregivers are not eligible for fourth doses at this time.

All facilities with regulated staff who can administer vaccines are strongly encouraged to provide vaccination for residents as soon as they are eligible. Public health has very limited capacity to support mobile vaccination efforts at this time, so waiting for this support could delay vaccination for residents.

Facilities that have staff onboarded with COVAX and have been providing vaccine can continue to [order COVID vaccine](#) as needed:

- Moderna is ready to administer (does not require reconstitution) similar to influenza vaccines
- The current supply available is a 10 x 0.5 mL dose vial
- The vial is stable in a vaccine fridge at 2 - 8°C for 24 hours after puncture
- Public health will provide supplies with the vaccine for administration – needles, alcohol swabs, sharps containers

Facilities that do not have regulated staff who can administer the vaccine are encouraged to inquire with other health care providers who provide service in the facility that may be able to support vaccination (physicians, NPs, pharmacists). If there is no provider available, facilities can call our Health Care Provider line at ext. 8806 to request mobile vaccination by health unit staff for their residents noting this may take several weeks for us to complete. We will have a nurse contact each facility in the coming weeks.

### **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.

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