

**Ministry of Long-Term Care**

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Minister

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**January 25, 2021**

**MEMORANDUM TO:** Long-Term Care Home Licensees

**FROM:** Erin Hannah  
Associate Deputy Minister  
LTC Pandemic Response

**SUBJECT:** **COVID-19 Vaccine Administration**

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As you know, thanks to the dedication and partnership between public health units (PHUs), hospitals and long-term care (LTC) homes, we met the Premier's commitment to offer a first vaccine dose to LTC residents, staff and essential caregivers in Peel, Toronto, York and Windsor-Essex in advance of the January 21<sup>st</sup> target.

Not only was this goal met early, we know other PHUs such as Ottawa, Durham and Simcoe-Muskoka have also completed a first dose vaccine offer in the LTC homes within their regions.

We are continuing to expand the vaccination program to all LTC homes and high-risk retirement homes (RHs). As communicated on January 20<sup>th</sup> the slow down in Pfizer deliveries to Canada has meant adjusting our plan to focus on residents and provide second doses, according to a modified dose interval, for those who are not residents. Our overall commitment has not changed, and we will reach the remaining staff and essential caregivers as quickly as possible as more supply is received.

We are confirming now that we are proceeding with immunizing all **long-term care, high-risk retirement, and First Nation elder care residents** across Ontario by February 5<sup>th</sup>. This means that homes in 14 PHUs<sup>1</sup> where first doses have not yet been available will have doses delivered to them on an expedited basis and will accelerate their vaccination program to reach residents as quickly as possible.

Successful vaccine administration continues to be reliant on the readiness of homes. Your local PHU will be contacting you to establish site-specific delivery plans based on the latest supply information and focused approach. The Ministry of Long-Term Care, together with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, has developed an assessment checklist (Attachment 1) to help you in your planning and preparation.

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<sup>1</sup> The PHUs include: 1. Chatham-Kent, 2. Algoma, 3. Lambton, 4. Grey-Bruce, 5. North Bay Parry Sound District, 6. Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge, 7. Hastings-Prince Edward, 8. Leeds, Grenville and Lanark, 9. Northwestern, 10. Peterborough, 11. Porcupine, 12. Renfrew County, 13. Sudbury, and 14. Timiskaming.

To support planning, we also urge you to keep in mind that costs related to vaccine administration are eligible expenses under the Prevention and Containment funding and note the following additional information:

### Consent

Informed consent is a critical component of vaccine administration. As with all vaccines, consent must be secured in advance. If you have not already started, we recommend you initiate the completion of consent forms immediately, so these are in place by the clinic date for each home. Please visit The Ministry of Health [COVID-19 Vaccine-Relevant Information and Planning Resources](#) page to obtain a copy of the COVID-19 Vaccine Screening and Consent Form, to be completed with the assistance of a health care provider. This page also includes a document to assist health care providers in obtaining consent: [Pre-Screening Assessment](#). We have also prepared a plain language Fact Sheet (translated into 10 languages) that can be used to help vaccine knowledge and understanding (Attachment 2).

### IT Readiness and Data Collection

In partnership with your local PHU, LTC homes should ensure that IT protocols are in place that define and confirm staff roles and responsibilities in data collection and reporting as well as ensuring that staff are appropriately trained in their assigned roles before your on-site clinic date. Training will be provided on data entry in the COVax-ON Vaccine Management System by the Ministry of Health. This tool is critical to enable a single, complete source of information and will make intake and process flow for clinics as efficient as possible.

While COVax-ON is the ultimate single source goal, we are asking homes to continue reporting vaccination data three times per week (Mon., Wed., and Fri. by 5pm EST) using the Ministry's Health Data Collection Service Form: V1 – COVID-19 Vaccination Data Collection LTCHs. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of receiving this information (in addition to COVax entry) to support rapid allocation and distribution decisions based on the best and most comprehensive data picture possible.

### Vaccinators' Access to Homes

Hospital and/or PHU staff entering LTC homes to administer COVID-19 vaccines are subject to the testing requirements outlined in the [Minister's Directive](#), falling into the category of 'Caregivers and Support Workers'. Please work with your local PHU to validate that teams meet this requirement prior to arriving on site. The Minister's Directive does not apply to workers who have a statutory right of entry into LTC (e.g., inspectors). General screening requirements before entry into the home (e.g., symptom screening and temperature checks) continue to apply to everyone.

### Vaccine Administration

We would like to note that with recent regulatory amendments to the [Regulated Health Professions Act \(RHPA\)](#), nurses (both Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses), pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, registered pharmacy students and pharmacy interns can also now administer a COVID-19 vaccine.

## Media Protocol

To prioritize the safety and health of residents, please do not plan on-site media events. Please establish communication plans for media protocols and escalation protocols, as well as other contingency planning, as needed, with your local PHU.

## Vaccine Uptake

Recently we shared some tips and strategies to help promote vaccine uptake and we are looking ahead to when we have more supply by working with partners to offer webinars for staff to address vaccine-related concerns. Please continue to share your best practices and areas where you think the ministry can further support vaccine uptake and vaccine confidence.

Please work with your local PHU on the planning and questions you have about the vaccine clinics in your homes. If you have questions about the above information, please reach out to Renee Mahalanobis, Director, LTC Projects and Stabilization in my office at [Renee.Mahalanobis@ontario.ca](mailto:Renee.Mahalanobis@ontario.ca).

In closing, I would like to note it is an honour to join the ministry and I look forward to working with you in partnership and guided by a shared commitment to do everything we can – vaccination, testing and screening, infection and prevention control, and following all public health measures - to keep our most vulnerable Ontarians safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

Erin Hannah  
Associate Deputy Minister

Attachments:

1. *Assessment Checklist*
2. *COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet*

c: Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC)  
Sheila Bristo, Assistant Deputy Minister, Long-Term Care Operations, MLTC  
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery, Ministry of Health (MOH)  
Michael Hillmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Capacity Planning and Analytics, MOH/MLTC  
Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario  
Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long Term Care Association  
Monika Turner, Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
Michael Jacek, Association of Municipalities of Ontario  
Colleen Geiger, President and CEO (Acting), Public Health Ontario