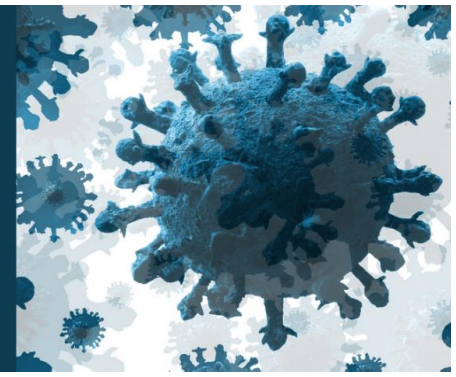


# COVID-19 Immunization Update

For Health Care Providers in Oxford County, Elgin County,  
and the City of St. Thomas



**Week of January 18, 2021**

## An Update from Dr. Joyce Lock, Medical Officer of Health

*Please share with staff as appropriate.*

### **REMINDER: SWPH COVID-19 Vaccination Weekly e-Newsletter**

- Southwestern Public Health requires all health care providers and organizations to sign up for our weekly COVID-19 immunization e-newsletter updates. This is the primary way immunization information will be shared across the region. If you have not already signed up, please do so here: <http://eepurl.com/hnoSX5>.
- *Please note: we are legally obliged to request opt-in for this e-newsletter.*

### **What You Need to Know this Week:**

- On January 15, the Ministry of Health was alerted by the federal government that due to work to expand its European manufacturing facility, production of the Pfizer-BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine will be impacted for a few weeks. As a result, Pfizer will temporarily reduce deliveries at its European facility to all countries receiving its vaccine, including Canada.
- Given scarce vaccine supply, a regional COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization Advisory Committee has been struck to help inform the public health unit's decisions regarding further prioritization when necessary. At this time, General Rick Hillier from the provincial COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force has indicated that all first doses must be prioritized for long-term care and high-risk retirement home residents, staff, and essential caregivers.
- MEMO: Update on Regional Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccine – January 20, 2021 (enclosed)
- The provincial goal is to vaccinate all long-term care and high-risk retirement home residents by February 15, 2021; this has resulted in the need to further prioritize access to the vaccine at this time. We are currently on track to meet this goal before February 15.
- Last week, 345 first-doses of the Pfizer BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine were administered in local long-term care homes experiencing outbreaks in our region. We are on-track to administer another 550 first-doses this week.

- Our current focus is to complete first-dose vaccinations for residents of long-term care homes. Our next focus will be on residents of high-risk retirement homes.
- We anticipate that second doses for long-term care home residents will begin the week of February 1. Second doses will be administered in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, between 21 and 28 days from the initial dose.
- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has updated their recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines:  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html>
- News Release: Ontario Achieves Key Milestone with Vaccinations in Long-Term Care:  
<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/60011/ontario-achieves-key-milestone-with-vaccinations-in-long-term-care>



## **MEMO: Update on Regional Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccine**

January 20, 2021

Huron Perth Public Health, Middlesex-London Health, and Southwestern Public Health will provide regular updates on the eligibility criteria for recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine in their respective regions.

The Ministry of Health, through the guidance of the provincial COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force led by General Rick Hillier, directs the allocation of the vaccine. Vaccine supply differs by region. Given scarce vaccine supply, a regional **COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization Advisory Committee** has been struck to help inform the public health units decisions regarding further prioritization when necessary. For more information on the COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization Advisory Committee, please visit the Middlesex-London Health Unit website at [www.healthunit.com](http://www.healthunit.com).

### **Current Provincial Direction on Prioritization**

The province has directed all first doses must be prioritized for long-term care and high-risk retirement home residents, staff, and essential caregivers. The goal is to vaccinate all long-term care and high-risk retirement home residents by February 15, 2020.

### **Supply Constraints**

The only product currently available in the region is the Pfizer-BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine. Due to manufacturing delays, no additional product is anticipated in the region before the week of February 1, 2021 at the earliest. **The significant reduction in supply has resulted in further prioritization.**

### **Additional Regional Direction on Prioritization**

Given provincial direction and the limited number of doses that are available regionally, only the following people are eligible to receive the first dose of the vaccine, effective immediately. Eligibility will be reviewed weekly and will be dependent on vaccine supply and Provincial direction.

#### **ELIGIBLE FOR FIRST-DOSE:**

- Long-term care home residents, as defined by the Ministry of Long-Term Care
- High-risk retirement homes residents, as defined by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
  - Co-located with long-term care homes
  - Containing a memory unit
  - Identified as Red or Yellow by the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority (RHRA)

### **ELIGIBLE FOR END-OF-DAY DOSES**

At the end of each clinic, there may be a small amount of additional vaccine available that is to be used to avoid wastage.

#### **Eligible for additional vaccine available at end-of-day during a mobile clinic, in the following order:**

1. Long-term care or high-risk retirement home staff\*, first dose
2. Long-term care or high-risk retirement home staff\*, second dose if appropriate
3. Essential caregiver

#### **Eligible for additional vaccine available at end-of-day at the Western Fair Agriplex, in the following order:**

1. Long-term care or high-risk retirement home staff\*, first dose
2. Long-term care or high-risk retirement home staff\*, second dose if appropriate
3. Essential caregiver
4. Immunizers of the COVID-19 vaccine
  - a. Immunizers are vaccinated to limit the potential for transmission between facilities when the mobile clinics are deployed

\* LHIN, Hospital, Primary Care and Paramedic Services staff who are directly providing on-site support to long-term care and retirement homes in outbreak, and have committed to a week or more of attending the facility, are considered as long-term care or high-risk retirement home staff.

### **NOT CURRENTLY ELIGIBLE FOR FIRST-DOSE**

No other individuals are currently eligible for the vaccine in this region. This includes the following exclusions:

- Previous COVID-19 cases are not eligible to receive the vaccine at this time given the scarce supply. Previous COVID-19 cases are assumed to have residual immunity.
- Individuals with active respiratory symptoms.
- Independent living facilities, seniors' apartments, hospice sites, and adult day programs.
- Healthcare workers not explicitly listed in the eligible groups.

### **CHANGES TO SECOND-DOSE SCHEDULE**

Consistent with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), some jurisdictions may maximize the number of individuals benefiting from a first dose of vaccine by delaying the second dose until further supplies of the vaccine become available, preferably within 42 days of receipt of the first dose.

#### **Given the scarce vaccine supply and in keeping with the direction from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health:**

- All second-doses of non-long-term care home and retirement home staff or residents will be rescheduled to 39-42 days after their first dose.
- All efforts will be made to continue to administer the second dose of long-term care home and retirement home staff at 21-27 days after their first dose. However, if required due to further supply constraints, second-doses of long-term care home and retirement home staff may be rescheduled up to 42 days after their first dose.