

## **Niagara Region Public Health prepares for rollout of large-scale vaccination later this month**

NIAGARA REGION, March 3, 2021 – With vaccination supply increasing later this month and the AstraZeneca vaccine now approved as a third vaccine in Canada, Public Health has plans ready to deliver vaccine on a large scale to protect the Niagara community as soon as vaccine has arrived.

Some parts of Ontario received initial COVID-19 vaccine shipments in December, a month earlier than Niagara. Some of these regions have begun limited vaccination of persons 80 years of age or older, while Niagara finishes vaccination of our highest risk population. As the provincial portal launches on March 15, and as vaccine becomes more plentiful later in March, Niagara is poised to be delivering mass vaccination at the same time as the rest of the province.

Once the provincial portal is open and mass vaccination clinic information becomes available, Niagara Region Public Health will notify eligible groups through broad communications (via community partners, media, advertising, social media, etc.) as well as our [COVID-19 vaccination webpage](#).

Following the provincial prioritization

- Vaccination began with long-term care home and high risk retirement home residents
- Niagara Region Public Health is also vaccinating seniors in other retirement homes and some congregate living settings with a greater risk of outbreaks
- Working with Niagara Health, front-line health care workers are being scheduled and vaccinated at this time
- Niagara Region Public Health will also begin vaccinating the Indigenous community this month before opening vaccinations to the 80 year of age and older demographic later in March

The provincial government has announced that a centralized vaccination registration portal will launch on March 15. This portal will be used by local public health agencies across the province and mass vaccination clinics will begin soon after this portal is launched, including in Niagara. At present, there is no waiting list and the general public cannot register for a vaccine appointment. Those currently eligible for the vaccine are being contacted directly by either Niagara Region Public Health or Niagara Health.

Recognizing the size of our region, Niagara will have vaccination clinics in all parts of the region to ensure no one in any of the 12 municipalities needs to travel far to get vaccinated. Coordination with the local municipalities is well underway and further details will be shared soon.

After vaccinating those 80 years of age and older, Niagara Region Public Health will follow the provincial prioritization criteria to move through progressively younger age brackets until all persons 60 years of age or older have had the opportunity to get vaccinated. At that point, essential workers throughout the region as well as other high-risk residents (e.g. those with chronic medical conditions) will be able to get vaccinated. The Ontario government hopes to open vaccination up to all Ontario residents by the start of fall, and Niagara intends to be in lockstep with that timeline.

All vaccination plans are, of course, subject to vaccine supply.

To date, Niagara Region Public Health has administered 10,973 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine

- First and second doses of the vaccine have been completed in long-term care homes
- Residents of high risk retirement homes received their first dose and second doses are now being completed
- Residents of additional retirement homes are currently receiving their first doses with second doses scheduled to start later this month
- Residents of half of our high risk congregate/communal living facilities have received their first dose and second doses are now being completed; the other half are receiving their first doses in the next two weeks

At the time of this release, working in partnership with Niagara Health, 24,268 COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in Niagara. That is just over 5 per cent of Niagara's population.

For the most current information, visit the [Niagara Region Public Health COVID-19 vaccination page](#).

If you do reach out to Public Health via phone or email with a vaccine eligibility question, please allow for 7-10 days for a response as staff are working very hard to plan for mass immunization clinics while supporting mobile clinics for Niagara's most vulnerable residents.

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