



MEMO: Update on Regional Prioritization of COVID-19 Vaccine

February 10, 2021

Huron Perth Public Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit, 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, prioritizes and directs the allocation of the vaccine. To ensure fairness across the province, local jurisdictions must adhere to the provincially determined sequence of recipients.

Periodically, vaccine supply differs by region and additional prioritization is necessary. In these instances, 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 <https://www.healthunit.com/covid-19-vaccine-prioritization>. Eligibility will be reviewed weekly and will be dependent on vaccine supply and Provincial direction.

Current Provincial Direction on Prioritization

On January 25, 2021 the province [directed](#) that all first doses must be prioritized for residents of long-term care, high-risk retirement, and First Nations elder care homes. **Currently, no other individuals are eligible for a first dose of the vaccine.**

This direction is consistent with the province's ethical framework to guide COVID-19 vaccine prioritization and distribution decisions. The core principles include the objective of minimizing harms and maximizing benefits by reducing overall illness and death related to COVID-19. Amongst those infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, age is the single most predictive risk factor for death; in Ontario, [87% of COVID-19 associated deaths](#) have occurred in those over the age of 70. To reduce the number of deaths in the province, prioritizing the immunization of older individuals will be critical.

Regional Update

Huron Perth Public Health, Middlesex-London Health, and Southwestern Public Health have provided a first dose of vaccine to nearly all eligible individuals. With rare exceptions, the only individuals currently receiving a vaccine in the region are those that are due for a second dose.

The only product currently available in the region is the Pfizer-BioNtech COVID-19 vaccine. Additional supply is anticipated in subsequent weeks, as well as further direction from the province regarding the next eligible groups.

ELIGIBLE FOR FIRST-DOSE:

Given provincial direction, only the following people are eligible to receive the first dose of the vaccine.

- 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)

As stated previously, Huron Perth Public Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit, and Southwestern Public Health have provided a first dose of vaccine to nearly all currently eligible individuals.

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. All other individuals who are due for a second dose
4. Immunizers of the COVID-19 vaccine, first dose

* 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, including the following:

- 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.

SECOND-DOSE SCHEDULE

Consistent with the provincial direction, to maximize the number of individuals benefiting from a first dose of Pfizer-BioNtech vaccine by delaying the second dose until further supplies of the vaccine become available.

Given the scarce vaccine supply, the Province has directed the following:

- All second doses for residents of long-term care, retirement and First Nations elder care homes will be delivered at 21-27 days after their first dose.
- All second-doses for all other groups will be rescheduled up to 42 days after their first dose.