

COMMUNIQUE

TO: First Nation Leadership, and Leadership Council

FROM: Chiefs of Ontario Health, Social and Education Sectors

DATE: November 25, 2020

RE: COVID-19 WEEKLY UPDATE

As COVID-19 continues to evolve, Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat will be providing updates concerning technical highlights and vital priority areas.

HEALTH SECTOR UPDATE:

COVID-19 VACCINES

The Health Sector has been closely monitoring the recent announcements concerning three COVID-19 vaccines. The Ontario Minister of Health, Christine Elliot, has confirmed that Ontario will be receiving 1.6 Million doses of the **Pfizer vaccine**, 800,000 doses of the **Moderna vaccine** and yet to be determined the number of doses of the newly announced **Oxford-Astra Zeneca** vaccine.

All three of these vaccines must be approved by Health Canada regulators before they can be widely distributed. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines makes use of a technology called mRNA-which unlocks the body's immune defenses.

This vaccine technology is very new and additional information can be found on both the Pfizer (www.Pfizer.com) and Moderna (www.modernatx.com) websites. The Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine makes use of a weakened version of the common cold virus that is combined with genetic material. (www.astrazeneca.com)

Potential COVID-19 Vaccines	Technology	Efficacy	Storage Temperature	Current Status
PFIZER/BIONTECH	Two-Dose Vaccine using mRNA (unlocks the body's immune defenses)	Pfizer and its partner BioNTech report their vaccine is more than 90% effective	Minus -70C (-94 F).Needs to be stored or shipped in dry ice or specialized freezers.	Seeking Emergency Use Authorization through Federal Govt. Anticipated release early 2021
MODERNA	Two-Dose Vaccine mRNA	Moderna reports that its vaccine is found to be 95%	Can be stored in freezer for up to 6 months at -20 degrees C or -4 degrees F. Once thawed can be stored in fridge for 1 month	Seeking Emergency Use Authorization through Federal Government. Anticipated release early 2021
OXFORD-ASTRAZENECA (AZD1222)	Two-Dose Uses a weakened version of a common cold virus and genetic material	Two dosing regimens show differences in efficacy. Combined analysis showed 70% efficacy	Can be stored a normal refrigeration temperatures for up to 6 months	Seeking Emergency Use Listing with World Health Organization for accelerated pathway to vaccine availability globally.AstraZeneca has pledged they will not profit from vaccine distribution for the duration of the pandemic

Many challenges remain before any vaccine can be rolled out including the characteristics of the vaccine itself, determining priority populations and the process to be used in rolling out the vaccines. The Ontario government announced the creation of a Vaccine Distribution Task Force. The task force will advise the province's development and implementation of an immunization program, including the ethical, timely and effective distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in Ontario. Rick Hillier former Chief of Defence has been appointed Chair and is tasked with leading the biggest roll out of any vaccine in a generation.

As well, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), an External Advisory Body is providing the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) with independent, ongoing and timely medical, scientific, and public health advice relating to immunization.

In addition to burden of disease and vaccine characteristics, NACI also advises on consideration of economics, ethics, equity, feasibility, and acceptability in vaccine distribution. Given that the arrival of vaccine supply is expected to be staggered over several months, NACI recommends that key populations in whom vaccine is deemed safe and effective based on clinical evidence available at the time of vaccine availability should be prioritized for COVID-19 immunization. Sequencing of populations and sub-prioritization within these populations will be based on:

- A population-based risk-benefit analysis of risk of exposure, risk of transmission to others, risk of severe illness and death, and the safety and effectiveness of vaccine(s) in key populations.
- Vaccine supply (number of available vaccine types, number and timing of available doses, number of doses required)
- COVID-19 epidemic conditions when the vaccine(s) become(s) available.
- Indigenous communities are considered to be at elevated risk of infection, which can be attributed to: prevalent underlying conditions, previous pandemic experiences, settings where physical distancing and other infection prevention and control measures are challenging, access to healthcare infrastructure is reduced, and infection could have disproportionate consequences. First Nations will be included within priority populations for the vaccine. NACI acknowledges that it is important that communities are provided with knowledge about the benefits of vaccines in general and of COVID-19 vaccine(s) specifically once available, to address misinformation about immunization, and communicate transparently about COVID-19 vaccine allocation decisions.

Additional information on the recommendations of the NACI about the vaccine and how it will be made accessible is available on the website:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-key-populations-early-covid-19-immunization.html>
- FNIHB document include link: Vaccine fo Canada Fact Sheet.

SOCIAL UPDATE:

During this pandemic, Jordan's Principle continues to be available to help First Nations children access the products, services and supports they need. Funding and access to supports through Jordan's Principle can help with wide range of health, social and education needs.

For more information on how to submit a Jordan's Principle request, interested individuals can call Jordan's Principle Call Centre 1-855-572-4453. Interested individuals and First Nation communities can also reach out to their Political Territorial Organizations, Independent First Nations, and Unaffiliated First Nations on Jordan's Principle and their processes for navigating and submitting Jordan's Principle requests.

EDUCATION SECTOR UPDATE:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Schools

There is still opportunity to take advantage of the PPE supply chain provided through the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. They have the following products available, at no cost: surgical

masks, face shields, gloves, cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer, and the products can be distributed on a recurring basis. This offer is open to First Nation schools, education organizations, Education Authorities, after school programs, study hubs, buses and daycares. To request an order form please reach out to Taunya.Paquette@ontario.ca

BE SAFE!

ATTACHMENT: FACT SHEET: What you need to know about the COVID-19 Vaccine for Canada

What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for Canada

Working to bring Canadians a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine



Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread and reduce the impact of infectious diseases, whether it's seasonal flu or childhood infections. A safe and effective vaccine(s) for COVID-19 will protect us against the novel coronavirus and will be an important step to safely resume normal life in Canada and around the world. The Government of Canada is working on all possible fronts to secure access to safe and effective vaccines and related supplies for Canadians. Here is what Canadians need to know about a future COVID-19 vaccine.



Only vaccines that are safe and effective will be approved for use in Canada. Canada is recognized around the world for its high standards for [drug and vaccine review, approvals](#) and [monitoring](#) systems; these will not be compromised. The Government of Canada has gained real-time access to manufacturer clinical trial data for the most promising vaccine candidates, and is working with the global regulatory community to make sure COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective before regularity approval is granted.



A vaccine will be available to everyone. Because of the unprecedented global funding and collaboration, more than 150 vaccine candidates are being researched around the world at this time. The Government of Canada is [investing in made-in-Canada research and has already made advanced purchase agreements](#) of many hundreds of millions of doses of the most promising vaccine candidates from around the world. This will give Canadians access to safe and effective vaccines as soon as they are ready. Not all vaccines will make it past the finish line, so that's why we are purchasing in advance a number of the most promising vaccine candidates. Health Canada is focusing on [reviewing and approving](#) COVID-19 vaccines as quickly as possible, while ensuring that they are well-studied and safe.



Because there will be limited quantities at first, once a vaccine is approved for use, key populations will need to be prioritized. We expect to have a limited supply of just a few million doses in the early weeks and months once Health Canada approves a vaccine(s) for use in Canada. That means governments will work together and continue to seek input from independent experts, like the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#) (NACI), to make decisions about how to prioritize vaccination. This will allow us to make the most impact by protecting high-risk populations and those who help keep our pandemic response, society and economy running. When there are enough vaccine(s) available, the vaccination program will be expanded.



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Canada



Building up immunity takes time. One dose of vaccine may not be enough to provide individual protection. You may need to get a second shot to allow your body to develop adequate immunity. We don't yet know what level of immunity in the population is sufficient to achieve [community immunity](#). Until that time, Canadians should continue to wash their hands, [stay home](#) when sick, maintain [physical distancing](#), [wear a face mask as appropriate](#), and keep using good [cough](#) and [surface](#) hygiene.



COVID-19 vaccines will be free. As more vaccines are made and distributed, we expect to be able to offer free vaccination to every Canadian who wants one. We know that we live in a global community, so we have committed to making sure [low and middle-income economies around the world will also have access](#) to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine(s). Until we're all protected, we're still at risk of a resurgence of illness from COVID-19.



Vaccination is a choice you should make to protect yourself, your family and community. Vaccination is a [personal choice](#) that the vast majority of Canadians agree is part of good health and important for prevention of serious disease.



We are committed to working with Canadians and keeping you informed. Things are bound to change, and so too will our approaches. We will rely on Canada's well-established public health system, the expertise and insights of researchers, health professionals, industry, community leaders and Indigenous knowledge to guide us through this journey to bringing Canadians a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. You can stay up to date by visiting [Canada.ca/coronavirus](#) and trusting [credible sources](#) of information.

We can all do our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19. For more information, visit

[Canada.ca/coronavirus](#)

or contact 1-833-784-4397