

## MEDICAL MEMO

### COVID-19 Vaccination Fall 2024/2025 Implementation Package

TO: Health Care Providers/ Health Care Setting/ Congregate Living Setting

FROM: Vaccine Program

DATE: September 2024

Dear Health Care Provider/ Health Care Setting/ Congregate Living Setting

The purpose of this memo is to share information about the 2024/2025 publicly funded COVID-19 vaccine program. Please find attached a letter from the Ministry of Health. General immunization documents for immunizers and vaccine clinics, including a vaccine factsheet and storage and handling guidelines, can be found on the Ministry of Health's website: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-vaccine-program>.

COVID-19 vaccination will be very important this fall to protect the health of individuals, families, and communities as well as mitigate impacts of respiratory diseases on our healthcare system. In addition to the 2024/2025 COVID-19 vaccine program, the Ministry of Health is launching the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza vaccination campaigns for the 2024/25 respiratory illness season. These programs will help reduce the risk of severe illness that could arise from COVID-19, RSV, and influenza this season. Information about the infant RSV and adult RSV, and Influenza programs have already been shared.

Facilities that have onboarded with Hamilton Public Health, for COVAXon will have access to the 2024/25 COVID-19 Vaccine Program. The distribution of your initial allotment is expected to begin in early to mid-October, as vaccine becomes available per our local distribution schedules. Please complete the attached Covid-19 vaccine order form to specify the required number of doses for your initial allotment. COVID-19 Vaccine will also be available in select pharmacies for high-risk and priority populations at this time. Immunization of high priority groups, listed below, can begin as soon as vaccine is available. Immunization of the general population can begin on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

**The first delivery of vaccine is for eligible high priority groups.**

**High Priority Groups for immunization as soon as the vaccine becomes available:**

- Adults 65 years of age and older;
- Residents of long-term care homes and other congregate living settings
- Pregnant individuals
- Individuals who are from a First Nation, Inuit or Métis community, and/or who self-identify as First Nation, Inuit or Métis.
- Members of racialized or other equity-deserving communities.
- Individuals 6 months of age and older with the following underlying health conditions:
  - Cancer
  - Cerebrovascular disease
  - Chronic kidney disease
  - Chronic liver diseases (limited to: cirrhosis, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, alcoholic liver disease, and autoimmune hepatitis)
  - Chronic lung diseases (limited to: bronchiectasis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, interstitial lung disease, pulmonary hypertension, pulmonary embolism)
  - Cystic fibrosis
  - Diabetes mellitus, type 1 and type 2
  - Disabilities (e.g. Down syndrome, learning, intellectual, or developmental disabilities; ADHD; cerebral palsy; congenital disabilities; spinal cord injuries)
  - Heart conditions (e.g., cardiomyopathies, coronary artery disease, heart failure, etc.)
  - HIV infection
  - Mental health disorders (limited to: mood disorders, including depression; schizophrenia spectrum disorders)
  - Obesity
  - Primary immunodeficiency diseases
  - Smoking, current or former
  - Solid organ or blood stem cell transplant
  - Tuberculosis
  - Use of corticosteroids or other immunosuppressive medication
  - Children with complex health needs
- Health care workers and other care providers in facilities and community settings
- Children 6 months to 4 years of age
- Individuals that work with birds or mammals

### Publicly Funded Products

Two products containing the latest selected strain are available this fall: Moderna Spikevax and Pfizer Comirnaty. Both are mRNA vaccines targeted against the omicron KP.2 variant. Moderna will be the vaccine available for children 6 months to 11 years of age. Vaccine allocation and distribution will be based on product availability.

The updated protein subunit COVID-19 vaccine, Novavax, will not be available in Ontario for the 2024/2025 season. Individuals who are unable to receive an mRNA vaccine will be encouraged to speak with their health care provider about treatment options, including the use of Paxlovid, to reduce the duration and severity of illness.

COVID-19 Vaccines		
	Moderna Spikevax	Pfizer Comirnaty
<b>Protection</b>	Omicron KP.2 Variant	Omicron KP.2 Variant
<b>Vaccine type</b>	Monovalent COVID-19 mRNA	Monovalent COVID-19 mRNA
<b>Age indication</b>	6 months of age and older	12 years of age and older
<b>Format</b>	Multidose vial	Multidose vial
<b>Dosage</b>	6 months to 11 years: 0.25 mL/ 25 mcg 12 years of age and older: 0.5 mL/ 50 mcg	0.3 mL/ 30 mcg
<b>Route</b>	Intramuscular injection	Intramuscular injection
<b>Special Notes:</b>		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicly funded COVID-19 vaccines must be administered by a regulated health professional who is authorized under the <i>Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991</i> to administer vaccines, or by a trained individual under a delegation made in accordance with the requirements set by the regulatory College of the regulated health professional.</li> <li>Publicly funded vaccine may be administered to individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for the COVID-19 vaccine program and without contraindications to the vaccine.</li> <li>NACI recommends a 15-minute post-vaccination observation period. If there is a specific concern about possible vaccine allergy, 30 minutes is a safer interval.</li> </ol>		

**Which COVID-19 vaccines are individuals eligible to receive?**

	<b>Moderna Spikevax</b>	<b>Pfizer Comirnaty</b>
6 months up to 11 years	✓	
12 years and older	✓	✓

**Vaccine Administration of Intramuscular (IM) injections**

According to the Canadian Immunization Guide appropriate vaccine administration is essential to the optimal safety and efficacy of vaccines. Vaccine administration practices are based on clinical trials that determine the dose, route and schedule for each vaccine. Refer to the Vaccine Administration Practices in the Canadian Immunization Guide for further information re: needle selection, route site and technique for vaccine administration.

**Vaccine Orders**

Please complete and return the standard vaccine order form attached to this memo to order your initial doses of COVID-19 vaccine. Orders will be filled based on vaccine availability. You will only receive COVID-19 vaccine once you have submitted an order form.

If you require additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine after your initial shipment, please submit the standard vaccine order form on or after October 15th, 2024. Initially, COVID-19 vaccine should be administered to the high priority groups identified above. Vaccines may be administered to the general population starting October 28th, 2024.

**Resources**

Please refer to the drug product monographs, the NACI Guidance on the use of COVID-19 vaccines during the fall of 2024 and the Canadian Immunization Guide for information on administration, product components, adverse events, recommendations, contraindications, and precautions.

The NACI statement can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/national-advisory-committee-immunization-guidance-covid-19-vaccines-fall-2024/naci-statement-2024-05-03.pdf>

The Canadian Immunization Guide chapter on COVID-19 vaccines can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-26-covid-19-vaccine.html>

### **Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI)**

Health care professionals are reminded to report adverse events following immunization to the Medical Officer of Health within 7 days of recognizing the reportable event. Please use the Public Health Ontario AEFI form

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/health-topics/immunization/vaccine-safety>

Completed reports should be faxed to Public Health at 1-844-444-0295. For questions related to reporting AEFIs, or to report an AEFI by phone, please call 905-546-2424 extension 7556.

It is not necessary to report expected events such as injection site reactions and mild fever. Unexpected, severe, and unusual adverse events should be reported promptly.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine program, please call 905-546-CITY (2489).

### **Attachments**

COVID-19 Vaccine Program CMOH Letter to Health Care Providers

COVID-19 Vaccine Order Form