

**Ministry of Health**  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Ontario Health Insurance Plan Division  
1075 Bay Street, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M5S 2B1  
Tel.: 416-327-8929

**Ministère de la Santé**  
Sous-ministre adjointe  
Division du Régime d'Assurance- santé de l'Ontario  
1075 Rue Bay, 6<sup>ème</sup> étage  
Toronto ON M5S 2B1  
Tél.: 416-327-8929

**Ministry of Health**  
**Ministry of Long-Term Care**  
Office of the Chief Information Officer  
Health Services I&IT Cluster  
56 Wellesley Street West, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M5S 2S3

**Ministère de la Santé**  
**Ministère des Soins de longue durée**  
Bureau du directrice de l'information Groupement ITI pour  
les services de santé  
56, rue Wellesley Ouest, 10<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto ON M5S 2S3

**Ministry of Health**  
Office of the Associate Deputy Minister,  
Pandemic Response and Recovery  
56 Wellesley Street West, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto ON M5S 2S3  
Tel.: 416 212-4433  
[www.ontario.ca/health](http://www.ontario.ca/health)

**Ministère de la Santé**  
Bureau du sous-ministre associé,  
intervention contre la pandémie et relance  
56, rue Wellesley Ouest, 10<sup>e</sup> étage  
Toronto ON M5S 2S3  
Tél. : 416 212-4433  
[www.ontario.ca/sante](http://www.ontario.ca/sante)

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**DATE:** February 1, 2021

**TO:** Sarah Hobbs, Alliance for Healthier Communities  
Kavita Mehta, Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario  
Caroline Lidstone-Jones, Indigenous Primary Health Care Council  
Jennifer Clement, Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic Association  
Leanne Clarke, Ontario College of Family Physicians  
Allan O'Dette Ontario Medical Association

**FROM:** Patrick Dicerni  
Interim Assistant Deputy Minister and General Manager  
Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) Division

Karen McKibbin  
Chief Information Officer/Assistant Deputy Minister  
Health Services I&IT Cluster

Alison Blair  
Associate Deputy Minister  
Pandemic Response and Recovery

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Vaccination and COVAX<sub>ON</sub>

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We are writing today to share some information as we work together to determine the role of the primary care sector in COVID-19 vaccination efforts. We want to start by thanking all of you for your overwhelming support and willingness to collaborate on the roll-out of Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan. As the ministry has heard through our various engagement tables and committees with you – primary care is ready and willing to help.

## **COVID-19 Vaccination Plan**

On January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the ministry shared more details on the rollout of the province's vaccine implementation plan, which includes the government's goal in preparing to immunize up to 8.5 million people by the end of Phase Two of the plan.

The Vaccination Distribution Task Force, led by General Rick Hillier, has put a plan in place to distribute and administer vaccine doses as quickly as possible, as more vaccines become available. As part of Phase One, Ontario continues to focus on vaccinating vulnerable populations, and those who care for them, following the [Ethical Framework for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution](#).

Additionally, the ministry released [guidance](#) on January 8, 2021 for healthcare worker prioritization, with a three-step process focusing first on sectors and settings, then on level of community risk, and lastly on individual risk. The work of the prioritization subgroup is ongoing, and communication on prioritization will continue to ensure primary care providers have all relevant information and guidance.

Public Health Units are responsible to plan and implement tailored strategies at the local level, and hospitals are supporting the vaccination program by providing storage and administering vaccines in some areas. The ministry continues to work with Public Health Units to monitor required supplies and will ensure availability of appropriate supplies through the provincial stockpile.

We know that strong partnerships between Public Health Units, hospitals, and community health care providers are key to ensuring effective vaccine implementation, and we have seen examples of these strong partnerships across the province. Primary care providers can and have been playing a significant role in supporting current efforts to administer vaccinations to the priority areas. As we enter the next phases of vaccine implementation, we expect there will be an even larger role for primary care providers. We are committed to continuing collaboration with you to help inform the program elements that primary care providers will partner in as we move forward.

### **COVAX<sub>ON</sub> Access and Training:**

As many of you are aware, COVAX<sub>ON</sub> is the online provincial system used to input the vaccine information for each individual along with managing site inventory. As we begin preparing for more primary care providers supporting the COVID-19 vaccination plan, we know there is a need for training, user and login credentials and support.

For Phase One, the COVAX<sub>ON</sub> access and training is only for the providers engaged with the hospitals and local Public Health Units to administer the vaccinations in mass clinics and in congregate settings. Further, given the need to pivot easily to changes, to leverage near-real time data for data driven decisions, to manage and monitor inventory levels, to minimize support demands and to ensure standards are met, COVAX<sub>ON</sub> will not be integrated with electronic medical records (EMRs). However, as the situation becomes more static in nature, integration opportunities may be

considered. The ministry is exploring mechanisms to ensure primary care providers have COVID-19 vaccine information about their own patients.

As we prepare for Phase Two and Three when more vaccines become available, the ministry will issue usernames and login credentials to primary care providers who indicate they will be administering COVID vaccines. This will be done in collaboration with local public health units. The ministry will also work with you and our internal ministry partners to organize training webinars to align in advance of your COVAX<sub>ON</sub> on-boarding schedule to ensure that we are proactively preparing and supporting the primary care sector.

We thank each and every one of you and the membership of your organizations for your ongoing partnership and collaboration on what will be the most ambitious immunization campaign in Ontario's history.



Patrick Dicerni



Karen McKibbin



Alison Blair

- c: Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Nadia Surani, Director, Primary Health Care Branch, OHIP Division, MOH
- Dr. David Price, Chair, Provincial Primary Care Advisory Table
- Jodi Melnychuk, Director, Vaccine Planning and Engagement
- Dr. Dirk Huyer, Chief Coroner for Ontario and Coordinator, Provincial Outbreak Response
- Daniel Warshafsky, Senior Medical Consultant, Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health

Medical Officers of Health:

- Dr. Jennifer Loo (A), The District of Algoma Health Unit
- Dr. Elizabeth Urbantke (A), Brant County Health Unit
- Dr. David Colby, Chatham-Kent Health Unit
- Dr. Robert Kyle, Durham Regional Health Unit
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- Dr. Ian Gemmill (A), Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
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