

COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping You Safe



To: All Staff and Professional Staff

From: Hospital Health Care Worker Vaccine Prioritization Committee

Date: Friday, February 19, 2021

RE: **COVID-19 Vaccination: Staff prioritization update**

The COVID-19 vaccine prioritization has raised many questions, anxieties, and frustrations among many. The health and safety of all staff, professional staff, patients, and the community remains our utmost priority.

Each and every one of you plays a critical and important role in our organization, and every one of you are valued members of our team. All health care workers, regardless of role, are currently included in Phase 1 of the Ministry's vaccine rollout plan and are deemed to be a Priority for vaccine administration provincially. If we continue to receive vaccine supplies, as expected, **all patient-facing staff and professional staff at our hospital who wish to be vaccinated will have their turn within the next few weeks.**

If it were possible to vaccinate everyone in this first week, we would do just that. Due to limited vaccine supply, however, we must prioritize vaccination based on the province's vaccine distribution plan and in a manner that first and foremost protects the health of the public. Please refer to the attached message from the Co-Chairs of the Hospital Health Care Worker Vaccine Prioritization Committee, which sheds some light on the challenges of prioritization.

Vaccinations for those included in the **Highest Priority Group** (identified in yesterday's memo) are expected to be completed by **mid-next week**. Vaccinations will **begin next week for the Very High Priority Group**. Those that will be first from this group are identified below, provided vaccine supplies are received as anticipated and there are no changes in direction from the Ministry or Public Health. **The vaccination clinic will contact the department managers/leads of those who qualify with appointment booking information.**

The prioritized groups as identified are firm – as they have undergone a rigorous process including ethics review– and were guided based on Direction from the Ministry of Health on the Priority Framework. As such, **we are unable to make adjustments in priority ranking unless there has been an error of omission made – meaning a group was left out of the ranking.** This does not mean that your questions or frustrations are not valid – they are. However, addressing every question/appeal would only slow the vaccination process resulting in further delays to vaccinating all health care workers in a timely manner. Our goal is to get vaccines into the arms as soon as possible in this process.

Very High Priority Groups for the next round of vaccinations to begin next week include:

- Adult Mental Health

COVID-19 UPDATE

Keeping You Safe



- Cardiovascular Catheterization Lab
- *Critical Support Services (eg. Housekeeping, Nutrition, Admitting, Utilization)
- Diagnostic Imaging
- Forensic Mental Health
- Hospital Elder Life Program (HELP)
- Hospitalists, Internal Medicine physicians, and Family Medicine physicians with admitting privileges (If not already captured in another area)
- Infection Prevention & Control
- Inpatient Units
- Lab and Phlebotomy (If not already captured in another area)
- Northwest Regional Cancer Care
- Obstetrics and Paediatrics
- Outpatient Services, including Surgical Day Care
- Pharmacy (If not already captured in another area)
- Porterage (If not already captured in another area)
- Social Work (If not already captured in another area)

Please note that all priority groups include any and all additional staff and professional staff that are regularly assigned to that area. For example, the ECG Technologists who regularly work in the Emergency Department (ED) are part of the ED group.

For details regarding self-declaration of risk factors, please review the February 18, 2021 memo at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Memo-COVID-19-Vaccination-Staff-prioritization-update-Feb-18-2021.pdf>.

Please understand that prioritization decisions are made by the Hospital Health Care Worker Vaccine Prioritization Committee which includes representation from professional staff, public health, nursing, administration and bioethics. Our unique geographic need and the current status of COVID-19 prevalence in the community also guides decisions.

We look forward to vaccinating all consenting staff and professional staff as soon as possible. Specific timeframes for when each department will be prioritized are still in development and further updates regarding the next group will be provided soon.

Thank you for your patience and understanding throughout this process.

All Hospital COVID-19 updates are also available on the iNtranet at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/>.

*Critical Support Services: The worker provides non-clinical support to direct patient care workers and, without the worker, safe direct patient care delivery and/or worker safety would be compromised (e.g. housekeeping, supply delivery, security, etc.). Source:

https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/CommunicableDiseaseControl/covid19/IH-PH-COV-297%20Principles%20for%20Definition%20of%20Essential%20Health-Care%20Workers_31Mar2020.pdf