

Summary: January 20, 2021

View the session: <https://cast.tbrhsc.net/townhall/archived/Townhall-Recording-2021-01-20.mp4>

What is the current status of COVID-19 vaccine activity? UPDATED JAN 22, 2021

- Vaccines are now being administered only to Residents of LTC homes as priority
- By end of day January 20th, over 2,000 vaccines were administered; 80% to LTC.
- Pfizer will temporarily reduce deliveries to all countries.
- We are still on target to complete LTC vaccinations of Residents by mid-to-late February.
- Administration of first doses to the next priority group will depend on supply chain.
- Priorities continue to be directed by the Provincial Vaccination Task Force.
- Our Hospital will play a role in the ongoing vaccine distribution plan, including supporting hospitals and communities throughout Northwestern Ontario to receive the vaccine.

What is the vaccine prioritization process at our hospital for health care workers?

- The Hospital Health Care Worker Vaccination Prioritization Committee determines how we will prioritize health care workers at our hospital and St. Joseph's Care Group. The provincial vaccination priority matrix considers patient population, exposure risk, and the criticality of those health care workers.

Can you explain the rationale behind extending the second dose timing?

- In studies, the vaccine was still effective on people who received it up to 42 days after the initial dose. Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommends 21 to 28 days and every effort will be made to meet that timeline.

How effective is the vaccine?

- The Pfizer vaccine is 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 7 days after the second dose.
- It is not yet known if asymptomatic spread of the virus can still occur.

If a person does not return for the second dose within the 28 days or even 42 days, do they need to start over? Is this a yearly vaccination?

- Based on the current guidelines, no, you would not start over.
- It is suspected that we may need to be vaccinated every year similar to the flu shot.

Can you get COVID-19 twice?

- Some studies show that very few people have had COVID-19 twice.

Can we swab/test everyone coming into the hospital?

- We don't currently have the resources needed, nor does the current status of positive cases dictate the need to do so.

Can you provide a critical care triage update?

- We are not currently at the stage where our Hospital would receive transfers of ICU patients from other hospitals.

If someone doesn't have direct patient contact, are they expected to get vaccinated?

- The guidelines are that all hospital staff should get vaccinated. Due to limited vaccine availability, we will prioritize patient facing staff.

What is the impact of the Emergency Order at our hospital?

- Please refer to the memo “Physical Distancing Guidelines – Revised for Provincial State of Emergency” (<https://comms.tbrhsc.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Memo-Updated-Guidelines-per-Emergency-Order-January-18-2021.pdf>).

What's the difference between the white and the blue procedure masks?

- All masks are level 2 or higher. You should wear the blue side of the mask on the outside, with the folds facing downwards.

Aside from changing your mask when it becomes damaged, wet or soiled, in what other situations are you required to change your mask?

- Masks should be replaced at the start of each shift.
- For further direction, refer to the policy IPC-2-16-Management of Novel Respiratory Infections.

Patients who were but are not longer positive for COVID-19 are flagged in Meditech as being positive. Can the system change so that this no longer populates in the "Antibiotic Resistant Organism" field once the patient has recovered?

- "Flagging" the Antibiotic Resistant Organisms field in Meditech is done by Infection Prevention & Control. It is a time consuming process. We will strive to find a solution.

Why don't the TBRHSC and TBDHU numbers for patients admitted match?

- If a patient at our hospital is from an area outside of the TBDHU region, they are not included in the TBDHU data but are accounted for in our hospital's numbers.

Will there be an expansion to the travel region? Can we get fast swabs on return from travel?

- We follow public health guidelines and will reassess based on the status in our community and province. Currently, we discourage any non-essential travel.
- Fast swabs are for essential travel, or locums who are essential to provide medical care.

What happened to our last strategic plan, called the Right Plan?

- We engaged you last year to help us develop our transitional strategic plan.
- That plan was paused so that our Hospital could focus on our pandemic response.
- Now, we are beginning the development of our next Strategic Plan.

Will there be flexibility with the requirement to use current year vacation by June 30?

- We are working on vacation bank processes and tweaks to our policy and encourage use of vacation days to get the rest that you need now.

Why is the staff door at the main entrance also an exit for patients/family?

- This door is the only one at the main entrance equipped with swipe card access to get in. It's also the only door with an automatic opener for those with accessibility issues.