

## Summary: January 6, 2021

View the recorded session here: <https://cast.tbrhsc.net/townhall/archived/>

### Summary:

#### What is our role at the COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic?

- The role of Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre is to receive, store, schedule, and administer the vaccine at the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic.
- Currently, we only have the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.
- We administer the vaccine to populations as directed by the provincial government.

#### Who are we vaccinating at this time?

- The information changes day to day.
- Our hospital has been directed to first administer the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to health care workers who work in patient care areas in long term care (LTC), as well as health care workers who will travel to northern communities to vaccinate those who live in those communities. For example, EMS and ORNGE staff on the front lines.
- We have started to vaccinate some of the staff in the Emergency Department (ED) when extra doses are available.
- We are getting ready to expand to vaccinate more health care workers at our Hospital.

#### Who identifies which staff from LTC are vaccinated first?

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) has provided guidance identifying long term care (LTC) workers who provide direct patient care be prioritized to receive the vaccine.
- Each LTC home is responsible for identifying which of their staff fit into the provincial priority group for getting vaccinated and provide lists of staff to the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic.
- Right now, the focus is on staff whose main job is working within patient care areas.

#### Why are we administering the vaccines out of our Hospital as opposed to on-site at LTC homes?

- LTC staff members are scheduled to receive their vaccines on site at our hospital because the vaccine is not allowed to be moved at this time. There is concern over the stability of the vaccine.
- We are awaiting guidance from the province on if we will be able to move the vaccine off of our hospital campus.

**It was in the news recently that hospitals in Alberta were dumping unused doses of the vaccine. Is that happening at our Hospital as well?**

- Given the limited supply and priority to distribute vaccines, we do not want to waste any doses.
- Once the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been reconstituted, it must be used within 6 hours.
- The pharmacy team reconstitutes only what they need in the moment and a little bit at time so that they don't thaw too much vaccine and have to waste it.
- Across the province, hospitals were asked to create a prioritization waitlist of staff.
- Through a lottery system, names are drawn from those on the waitlist if there are extra doses. The person drawn from the lottery will be called and if they cannot come immediately to get the vaccine, we move to the next person on the list to ensure doses don't go to waste.
- In the future, we will continue with the lottery system for cancellations but also have scheduled appointments for Hospital staff.

## **How are we prioritizing what Hospital staff will be vaccinated first?**

- The Health Care Vaccination Priority Committee consists of partners across the health care system in Thunder Bay, including a Patient and Family Advisor and a Bioethicist.
- The Health Care Vaccine Priority Committee was provided the Health Care Worker Vaccine Priority Setting Guidance matrix by Ministry of Health, to help prioritize which staff will be vaccinated first.
- Hospital staff is being prioritized by:
  - their risk of exposure to COVID-19 based on role and responsibility in the health care setting;
  - their risk of severe disease outcomes from COVID-19 among patient population served;
  - their criticality to health system capacity.
- The Committee determined that the Emergency Department (ED) should be the first priority group to receive the vaccine, followed by the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), and those working in the Assessment Centre and Vaccination Clinic.

## **Can you explain why the Emergency Department was chosen as the first group?**

- The Health Care Vaccination Priority Committee used the Health Care Worker Vaccine Priority Setting Guidance matrix as a guide, along with guidance from the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic leadership and other Ontario hospitals.
- Within the matrix there is a scoring system that allows us to score and critically look at exposure rate, the criticality to capacity both internally and externally, and other factors. Using that score, we are able to rank the different areas.
- Based on matrix scoring, it was determined that for our hospital, the Emergency Department (ED) should be the first priority to receive the vaccine, followed by the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

## **When will the rest of the Hospital be vaccinated?**

- As of now, we have only been using extra doses or the doses from missed appointments to give to hospital staff based on a lottery system waitlist.
- We are hoping to start prioritizing areas within the acute care stream in the near future.
- Once the priority areas are done, we hope to get everyone working in acute care vaccinated.
- As always, we will follow the direction of the Ministry of Health.
- We will share those details as they are determined.

## **Is the recommendation that all staff get the vaccine once it becomes available?**

- Yes, staff are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated when it is their turn to do so.
- You get the vaccine as a strong, healthy person not just to protect yourself, but to protect the people around you.
- Even after you get the vaccine, it is important that everyone remain diligent with all public health measures, such as wearing a mask, frequent hand washing, and physical distancing.
- Once you receive the vaccine, you will receive a piece of paper and an email that confirms your vaccination. It is important to share this information with Occupational Health & Safety in case they have to do contact tracing later on.