

OHT-N partners working with HKPR District Health Unit to begin local vaccine rollout following arrival of first 700 doses in region

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit (HKPRDHU) shared “A Dose of Good News” this week, in a January 25 news release confirming that the first local allocation of COVID-19 vaccine had been received. HKPRDHU has been working with its area health care partners to ensure that plans were in place, and ready to be implemented, once the vaccine was received, and this planning will prove very beneficial in the days ahead.

The province is guiding the distribution of the vaccines as they become available in Ontario through the federal procurement process and has developed a phased approach for the rollout.

Ontario is currently in the first phase, with residents and staff of long-term care and retirement homes identified as the first priority population to be immunized. The province announced on January 25 that it is now aiming to have all residents of long-term care and high-risk retirement homes vaccinated by February 5, 2021. Depending on vaccine availability, health care workers, including staff and physicians at local hospitals with patient-facing responsibilities, would be immunized next. Vaccination of these priority groups has already been underway in areas of the province that have seen the highest number of cases.

“Like everyone else, we have been very anxious to get the vaccine into the arms of our local residents,” said Dr. Ian Gemmill, Acting Medical Officer of Health for the HKPRDHU. “Yesterday was the day we’ve been waiting for. We have been working with our local hospital partners and our long-term care and retirement homes to work out the logistics of this and plan to implement the program as quickly as possible. We received 700 doses of the Moderna vaccine January 25th and hope to receive more next week. This is very good news for our region.”

The vaccine was delivered to Ross Memorial Hospital, in Lindsay, which has agreed to receive and to store the HKPRDHU vaccine. From there, Health Unit staff will co-ordinate distribution of the vaccine to long-term care and retirement homes across the HKPRDHU region, including Northumberland, and support each of them as they vaccinate their residents and staff in advance of the province’s February 5th goal. At this time, it is expected that 100 to 150 or more vaccinations will take place each day in long-term care homes throughout Northumberland County and the other regions covered by the HKPRDHU. Area hospitals will immunize their own staff once enough vaccine becomes available, in accordance with the province’s prioritization schedule.

“The Ontario Health Team of Northumberland thanks the Health Unit for the hard work that has gone in to advocating for our region, and stands ready to support this priority work in any way needed,” said Linda Davis, spokesperson for the team. “We can assist with storage of the vaccine, vaccination blitzes to vulnerable populations in long-term care, retirement and congregate living facilities and, with municipal partners, the broader community rollout—whatever is needed, we will support. The only limiting factor right now is the number of available doses, and this is out of our control. We were extremely pleased to receive the Health Unit’s news that 700 doses of the Moderna vaccine were received yesterday. While we appreciate some parts of Ontario have been much harder hit than Northumberland, we cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is that we too continue to see vaccine flow into this community and all the communities served by the HKPRDHU to ensure we can avoid COVID-19 cases continuing to rise. Until then, as urged in previous appeals from the OHT-N, the best means of protection is the prevention measures we have all been taking: maintaining physical distancing, wearing a mask, practicing good hand hygiene, staying home when we are ill and getting tested if symptoms do appear.”

“Many of our residents are asking for the vaccine or wanting to be put on a waiting list,” Dr. Gemmill said. “Unfortunately, we are still some months away from being able to either offer mass immunization clinics in our communities or to support primary care providers as they immunize their patients.”

HKPRDHU currently anticipates that additional doses of the vaccine will be available in the spring or early summer and the province will move into the second phase of roll-out at that time: expanding to other target populations that it has identified, including essential workers, older adults, and at-risk populations. The third phase of the vaccine distribution plan is expected to start in the summer and will include vaccinating the rest of the population who want to receive the vaccine.

Looking for information on COVID-19?

For the most up-to-date provincial information on COVID-19, including symptoms, visit Ontario’s dedicated COVID-19 website: ontario.ca/page/how-ontario-is-responding-covid-19. For local updates, visit the HKPR District Health Unit website: hkpr.on.ca/ For information on where to obtain a COVID-19 test, see the OHT-N website: ohtnorthumberland.ca/en/ohtn/OHTN_Homepage.aspx

Looking for information about the currently approved COVID-19 vaccines?

Learn about COVID-19 vaccines and when they will be available in Ontario on the province of Ontario’s COVID-19 webpage here: covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccines-ontario
Find context on vaccines from our local HKPRDHU here: hkpr.on.ca/2020/12/17/covid-19-vaccines/
Find a useful Q&A from Ontario doctors here: askontariodoctors.ca/covidvaccine.



NHH President and CEO Announces Intention to Retire by August 1, 2021

Following more than seven years in the leadership role of Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH), President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Linda Davis has notified the NHH Board of Directors of her intention to retire later this year. Ms. Davis will remain in the position until her successor is identified, with the goal of retiring by August 1, 2021.

“We were sorry to receive this news,” said Pam Went, Board Chair of NHH, in the announcement issued on January 14, 2021, “but Linda Davis is concluding her career at NHH with achievements that stand us in very good stead for the future ahead: financial stability, enhanced services to better meet the needs of our growing and diverse population, strategic capital improvements, strong community collaboration through the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland—an innovative model of care delivery Linda has championed from the start—and a culture of teamwork that is inclusive of both health-care providers and the patients and families we serve.”

The Ontario Hospital Association was among those who were swift to thank Linda Davis on social media for her leadership noting, on Twitter: “Thank you for your dedicated & strong leadership, especially during this extremely difficult period. You have been a true innovator in supporting the diverse & unique health care needs of your community.”



New Rapid Access Addiction Medicine Clinic to open in Northumberland

Northumberland Hills Hospital Community Mental Health Services (NHHCMHS) has partnered with Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) and Four Cast Addiction Services to offer a new Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinic in Northumberland.

Open Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM, the Clinic, located in the NHHCMHS offices on the 2nd floor at 1011 Elgin Street West, offers expedited, barrier-free treatment for individuals who are addicted to alcohol or opioids. Self-referrals are welcome and appointments are now being booked. For more information please see the related news release at nhh.ca or call the clinic at (905) 377-9891.