

COVID-19 Update

Date: Friday, January 29, 2021

To: Everyone at HHS

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Subject: **Expectations and accountability regarding the HHS vaccination process**

HHS actions

HHS is following [provincial direction](#) to stop administering first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to anyone other than residents of long-term care facilities and high-risk retirement homes. This is attributable to global supply issues related to the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

This decision is very disappointing. HHS leadership continues to press the Province about the need to vaccinate hospital workers as soon as possible.

Personnel from the HHS vaccination clinic are currently contacting staff, physicians, residents and learners to inform them of their rescheduled appointment for their second injection. These will now occur between 35 and 42 days after injection of the first dose.

What's expected from everyone

This extension of the interval between the two doses may be upsetting for many. We acknowledge these are stressful times and that emotions may run high. However, respect and understanding are key reasons behind the successful teamwork that has enabled our hospital to respond admirably to the pandemic.

We offer these reminders for everyone:

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- Courtesy, respect and other principles from our [Values-Based Code of Conduct](#) should always guide interactions with clinic staff, after all THEY ARE colleagues, many of whom are volunteering to schedule appointments.
 - Some have neglected to abide by these principles in their discussion with the clinic's schedulers. We understand that examples of bad interactions are not the norm but they take a heavy toll on our colleagues.
 - Those engaging in inappropriate behaviour will be identified and action will be taken by leaders.
 - Those with previous vaccination appointments will be contacted by the vaccination clinic to be informed of their new booking. These appointment dates cannot be altered to suit individual preference. We thank everyone in advance for keeping their new appointment.

Vaccination sequencing and individual accountability

It is also essential that everyone at HHS who has registered online to receive the vaccine, and has yet to get their first injection re-examine how they self-identified within the sequencing groups. The fact is some have identified themselves in a sequencing group which does not appropriately reflect their circumstances.

FAQs and the sequencing group documents can be [found online](#). Anyone who thinks they mistakenly assigned themselves to the wrong sequencing group can simply register online again and the previous submission will be erased.

We want to protect the **teams** from the highest risk areas across our hospitals (EDs, ICUs, COVID units) as per provincial guidance. This is not based on an individual's personal risks – in many cases, it is actually about the risk for patients. A thorough review of the registration and sequencing group is underway, jointly with our colleagues from St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton.

Here are further reminders on the sequencing of vaccinations:

- The vast majority of those who have self-identified to date, as part of sequencing group 1, have received their first injection.
- We estimate that about half of remaining HHS workers are in sequencing group 3, with the other half divided about equally between groups 2 and 4.
- Staff on outbreak units do not automatically get included in sequence group 1 – the increased PPE protocols in outbreak units offer the necessary protection.
- Staff, physicians, residents and learners should NOT email the vaccine clinic with their unique situations as sequencing is determined by team risk assessments and is not based on individual risk assessment.

This pause in vaccinations is temporary. We are still planning to offer the vaccine to anyone at HHS who wishes to receive it, as soon as possible, based on available supplies and provincial directions. More information will be communicated as the situation evolves.

We thank everyone for their collaboration.

Dave, Michele, Leslie and Bruce