

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

January 11, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Members' Lounge, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W

Good afternoon.

The delivery of a successful COVID-19 immunization campaign requires the well-coordinated work of all three levels of government.

The Government of Canada is responsible for approving, procuring and distributing COVID-19 vaccines to the Province of Ontario.

The Province of Ontario is responsible for receiving approved vaccines from the Government of Canada, establishing the vaccine distribution priorities, and distributing the vaccines across the Province.

Once the City of Toronto is provided with COVID-19 vaccines, by the Province of Ontario, we are responsible for administering these vaccines in accordance with the prioritization framework developed by the Province.

The City of Toronto created its Immunization Task Force in November and immediately began planning for the eventual launch of COVID-19 immunization clinics in Toronto.

Our Immunization Task Force continues to be hard at work, ensuring that the City of Toronto is ready to launch COVID-19 Immunization Clinics as soon as vaccines are made available to us.

The Province of Ontario both created the vaccine distribution framework, and requested that Toronto be prepared to open and operate immunization clinics to support the overall vaccination efforts.

These clinics are planned to operate between the point where Hospitals begin to immunize high-risk populations, which is ongoing now, and the

point at which vaccines become readily available to anyone who wishes to receive one, by way of primary care physicians and pharmacies.

Delivering these vaccines is a top priority for the City of Toronto and we are working every day to ensure that we are ready to go, the moment that vaccine is available.

The City of Toronto's COVID-19 immunization plan includes the establishment and operation of multiple immunization clinic sites, which will be located strategically around the city.

This network of clinics will include the use of large public facilities, which we are finalizing now, as well as a number of City-operated facilities, including community centres.

In addition to the network of immunization clinics that will be operated by the City of Toronto, our immunization plan also includes the provision of both mobile clinic capabilities and priority neighbourhood response teams.

These mobile clinics and neighbourhood response teams will enhance our ability to meet the needs of every resident, in every community in the city. Developing, launching and operating an immunization campaign of this scope and magnitude is a massive undertaking.

We are actively putting the plans in place to ensure that we are ready to go.

This includes numerous facility and logistics plans, staffing plans, security and safety plans and all of the operating procedures and medical oversight that are required.

The development of these plans builds on the expertise and experience of both our Toronto Public Health team and our Hospital partners, who have deep experience in operating significant immunization operations.

The Province asked that we be ready to launch our network of immunization clinics by April 1.

However, the Province has also been clear that these dates remain fluid and largely dependent on the availability of vaccines.

As such, the City will be ready in the event that vaccines are made available to Toronto earlier than presently expected, which is why we are putting our plans and provisions in place, well in advance of the estimated date of April 1.

In order to ensure that we are able to efficiently and effectively operate COVID-19 immunization clinics, in non-hospital settings, we must also ensure that there is a robust, tested and validated plan in place to support this effort.

As indicated by Mayor Tory, we have been asked by the Province to accelerate the launch of one clinic, in a non-hospital setting, with a sample group of healthcare workers.

In response to this request, and in collaboration with the Province of Ontario, we will be opening the first COVID-19 immunization clinic on Monday January 18, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, located at 255 Front Street West.

This immunization clinic is planned to operate from 11:00 AM through 8:00 PM, 7 days per week, for a period of at least six consecutive weeks.

In accordance with the allocation of vaccines by the Province of Ontario, we are planning to administer up to 250 1st dose COVID-19 vaccinations each day, for the first 3 weeks.

Over the course of the following weeks, we will focus on the administration of the 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccination, for that same sample group of people.

The group of people who will be included in this initial COVID-19 immunization clinic, will be primarily comprised of healthcare workers who work on the frontlines of COVID-19, in support of some of our most vulnerable residents.

This will include frontline healthcare workers in our shelter system, including harm reduction workers and streets to homes workers. This accelerated immunization clinic is fully scalable, and the scope of operations can be increased quickly, should the availability of vaccine increase as we move forward.

This will enable both the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario to assess and validate all aspects of out-of-hospital, COVID-19 immunization clinic operations, including technology, logistics and clinic operating procedures.

Following the completion of the initial period of clinical operations, we will work with the Province of Ontario on the completion of a comprehensive clinic playbook, which will be available for distribution across the Province, upon completion.

This is critical work that must be completed in order for COVID-19 immunization clinics to be launched, both across Toronto and across the Province of Ontario, moving forward.

In Toronto, we will be ready to activate the full scope of our COVID-19 immunization clinic operations, as soon as vaccine availability permits.

I would like to acknowledge and thank each of our team members who continue to work every day, to bring our first immunization clinic online, and who will then continue on to operate, and evaluate this clinic.

I am blessed to work alongside such caring and dedicated people, who are giving their all to put COVID-19 behind us.

I thank each one of them for their tireless service.

Thank you.