

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

January 18, 2021 at 2 p.m.

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

Good afternoon.

Today is an important day in our continuing fight against COVID-19. Earlier this morning, our first non-hospital operated COVID-19 immunization clinic began operations inside the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, as part of a proof-of-concept exercise.

A sample group of healthcare workers began receiving vaccines this morning.

As a reminder, at this point, this clinic is open by appointment only and is not able to accept walk-in clients nor those who do not have a confirmed appointment.

The City of Toronto was asked by the Province of Ontario to accelerate the launch of this first clinic in order to test and validate all aspects of the clinic operations plan.

As part of the proof of concept work, our teams are validating the registration lists and schedules that have been assembled for this initial clinic.

Yesterday afternoon, we understood that there were potential issues with respect to the initial registration process for this clinic, including some registering who may not fall into the prioritization framework.

We are in the process of reviewing these issues in order to ensure that we implement any necessary changes moving forward.

Should we determine that there are in fact people registered who do not qualify for vaccine at this time, we will contact those people directly, reminding everyone that the proof-of-concept clinic's initial clientele are frontline healthcare workers working in the city's shelter system and in public health.

These proof of concept operations provide us with an important and valuable opportunity to ensure that all aspects of clinic operations are ready for wide-scale deployment when vaccine becomes widely available.

An important outcome of this work will be the creation of a clinic operations playbook that will ensure that we are ready to open a wider network of clinics across Toronto, once vaccine supply allows.

This completed playbook will be provided to our Provincial partners for their use as well.

At present, this clinic is operating on the basis of administering 250 vaccinations per day, while we operate in proof of concept mode.

This is approximately 10% of the planned clinic capacity of more than 2,500 doses per day, which we expect to deliver once the clinic is operating normally.

We are initially operating this clinic at this scaled back capacity, in direct response to available vaccine.

The procurement and supply of COVID-19 vaccine is the responsibility of the federal government, who then distribute vaccines provincially.

The Province of Ontario then allocates vaccines for local administration, based on available vaccine supply, and in accordance with their prioritized vaccine distribution framework.

We were disappointed to learn that the delivery of Pfizer vaccine to Canada, is expected to be delayed, as a result of manufacturing delays in Europe.

As a result, we have now been advised, by the Province, that we will only be able to operate this proof-of-concept clinic, for an initial 5 days, due to the lack of availability of COVID-19 vaccine.

Accordingly, we are required to pause clinic operations, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre site, as of the end of day on Friday January 22.

Anyone who successfully scheduled an appointment to receive their first dose in the MTCC clinic beyond this Friday, will be advised directly, but those with appointments on January 23 or after should plan on their appointments being cancelled until further notice.

There will be no impacts to second dose availability, and we will ensure that everyone who receives their first dose, before the pause of operations, also receives their second dose within the permitted time frames.

Of course, we look forward to resuming clinic operations as very soon as we are able to do so, as advised by our provincial partners.

We are continuing to explore all options to accelerate our ability to administer vaccines to Toronto residents, once larger quantities of vaccine are available.

This will include planning for extended hours of clinic operations, expanded clinic capacity targets and implementing innovative delivery methods that meet the needs of our city; including mobile vaccine clinics, priority neighbourhood response, hospital-led clinic operations and widespread public access via pharmacies and primary care physicians.

Everything we have done in responding to COVID-19 in Toronto has been fully scalable, from the design and operation of the COVID-19 incident management system, to the operation of this and every other vaccination clinic that we are planning for.

This clinic, as with all the clinics we will operate, has been specifically designed and operated to protect all aspects of infection prevention and control, commonly known as IPAC.

Finally, the enforcement of public health-related Regulations has been a priority for the City of Toronto since the outset of COVID-19.

Our coordinated enforcement teams have been working diligently to enforce the Regulations relating to COVID-19.

The City has taken formal enforcement action 1,965 times to date, in response to COVID-19.

As a result of violations of the Reopening Ontario Act, 10 charges were laid and 12 notices were issued against owners/operators of retail stores, linen and housewares stores, beauty supply and nail salons, and a hookah lounge.

Enforcement staff also conducted 146 proactive inspections of restaurants/bars, with no tickets being issued.

Additionally, 41 charges were laid as a result of large gatherings on private property. This included a gaming house, and gatherings in private residences.

Toronto Police also responded to a number of protests, resulting in 20 charges being laid under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and 4 charges being laid under the Criminal Code.

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we all do our very best to put COVID-19 behind us.

Please continue to monitor toronto.ca/COVID-19 for the most accurate and up to date information in our City.