

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

February 10, 2021 at 2 p.m.

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

Good afternoon.

In November 2020, our COVID-19 Immunization Task Force began the process of identifying and securing facilities to be used as City-operated immunization clinics.

As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have developed a robust and scalable plan for the provision of an initial network of immunization clinics, across Toronto, that will support the overall mass COVID-19 immunization effort.

Additionally, we have built and implemented comprehensive incident management and support systems, by leveraging our Emergency Operations Centre, ensuring that our immunization clinic operations are fully supported.

Our overarching immunization strategy includes City-operated clinics, additional clinics that will be operated by both hospital and community partners, mobile clinic operations, prioritized community response and the eventual widespread availability of vaccine through primary care physicians and local pharmacies.

The deployment of City-operated immunization clinics forms the backbone for this important work.

The target for the commencement of City-operated immunization clinic operations continues to be in early April.

This date has been established in collaboration with General Hillier and the Provincial vaccine distribution task force, in direct response to the forecasted availability of COVID-19 vaccine.

However, our plans are nimble and we are ready to accelerate the initiation of immunization clinic operations as required.

On January 18th and 19th, at the request of the Province, we opened and operated a “proof of concept” immunization clinic at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

This clinic is one of nine City-operated immunization clinics that are planned.

While operations at this clinic are currently on hold, pending vaccine availability from the provincial government, we will be reopening this clinic on February 15 and 16, in order to administer the 2nd doses of COVID-19 vaccines to each of the 378 healthcare workers, who received their 1st vaccine dose in this clinic in January.

The reopening of this clinic on February 15 and 16, will only be for the purposes of administering these scheduled 2nd doses of Moderna vaccine.

New 1st doses of vaccine will not be administered during the upcoming two days of operation, nor will this clinic be open to the public.

Each of the 378 healthcare workers, who received their 1st dose during the proof of concept immunization clinic, have been scheduled to attend on either February 15 or 16.

The planning and preparations for the remaining eight City-operated immunization clinic locations, that Mayor Tory announced, are well underway.

In fact, the Malvern Community Centre clinic has already been fully assembled and is ready to go, as soon as vaccine is available.

We are continuing to prep the 7 remaining clinic locations, with all nine City-operated clinic locations being prepped, and ready to go, on or before April 1.

The decision as to when any, or all of these City-operated immunization clinics will open and operate, lies with the Province, in accordance with vaccine availability.

Likewise, the determination as to who will be prioritized for vaccination, within the City-operated immunization clinics, also lies with the Province in accordance with the Provincial prioritized vaccine distribution framework.

Our commitment has been to ensure that the City of Toronto is ready go when the time comes, and we will be.

Our teams have been at work, nonstop, since November and that work continues 7 days per week.

Our comprehensive COVID-19 immunization plan includes four key tactical elements, each of which operate under the medical direction of Toronto Public Health.

Our plan includes:

- Providing advice, education and support to partner hospitals and community agencies;
- Operating a network of large, City-operated immunization clinics;

- Operating a network of smaller, City-operated community-based immunization clinics; and
- Operating and deploying both City-operated community-response vaccination teams, and mobile clinics, on an on-demand basis.

Our Immunization Task Force Community Liaison Team is engaged in developing and implementing a targeted approach, to ensure universal equity for vaccine access.

The team is working with racialized communities to determine the best approach to meet each community's unique needs and interests.

Last week, we announced the Black Community COVID-19 Response Plan, developed to provide enhanced support for Black Torontonians.

Our team has also reached out to South Asian communities and is currently working with community leaders to determine the engagement that will work best for them.

We are also actively engaging with Indigenous communities through our Indigenous Affairs Office.

This important work will ensure that every Toronto resident has effective and efficient access to COVID-19 vaccine, as soon as they are available.

Within the present planning framework, more than 120,000 COVID-19 vaccines will be able to be administered each week, through the network of 9 City-operated immunization clinics, once they are operating as planned.

In keeping with my commitment to you from the outset, our plans are both scalable and nimble, such that we will be able to respond to changes in the vaccine availability landscape.

Once operational, our City-operated immunization clinics are planned to operate 7 days per week, with vaccines being administered over a 9 hour period each day.

Staff will be on site in each clinic, both before and after the 9 operational hours, in order to ensure that all aspects of infection, prevention and control and the many required administrative and reporting tasks are completed daily.

At the point where we are fully operational, a team of more than 1,400 staff will be engaged, enabling us to maintain operations 7 days per week.

Our nine City-operated clinics will leverage the Provincial COVAX software system, ensuring that our clinics are connected directly with our Provincial partners in live-time.

Once vaccine is available, and once the next phase of vaccine prioritization and roll-out has been determined by the Province, there will be a clear and wide-spread communication.

When the time comes, we will ensure that we communicate clearly, as to where and when you can receive your vaccine, and what the process of making your appointment will be.

However, to be very clear, **none** of the nine City-operated COVID-19 immunization clinics, that we are announcing today, are open at present, nor do we have confirmation as to when the clinics will be able to open as of yet.

This is dependent on the availability of vaccine, as advised by our Provincial partners.

Once we have additional information relating to the timing of the commencement of clinic operations, we will update you directly, and will ensure that [Toronto.ca/covid-19](https://toronto.ca/covid-19) always contains the most current information.

In closing, it is important to reiterate that our overarching immunization strategy includes not only the 9 City-operated clinics, but also a number of clinics that will be operated by hospital and other community partners, mobile clinic operations, targeted community response and the eventual widespread availability of vaccine through family doctors and local pharmacies.

Our City-operated immunization clinics are just one piece of the immunization plan.

There will be many opportunities for vaccination, for all Toronto residents, once the supply of vaccine is re-established.

Thank you.