

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

March 8, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

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

Chief Pegg Remarks – March 10, 2021

Before I begin my formal remarks today, I would like to acknowledge that it was 365 days ago today that we first activated our emergency operations centre, in response to COVID-19.

Our teams have worked since that time, to plan for and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic as it has evolved and developed.

I owe a debt of gratitude to each and every member of our team who continues to do their best to help us manage this emergency and get to the point where we can return to all these things we miss so badly.

Thank you one and all. You continue to make us all very proud.

As Mayor Tory announced earlier this week, on March 17, the following city-operated COVID-19 immunization clinics will begin initial vaccinations for Toronto residents who were born in 1941 or earlier:

- Metro Toronto Convention Centre;
- Scarborough Town Centre; and the
- Toronto Congress Centre

Beginning March 17, these clinics will operate 7 days per week, from 11:00 AM through 8:00 PM daily.

As you will recall, we were asked to bring the Metro Toronto Convention Centre clinic online, in January, as a proof of concept clinic.

During the proof of concept operations, we had the opportunity to evaluate all aspects of clinic operations, including client registration and scheduling.

As result of unforeseen reductions in vaccine availability, operations at the initial proof of concept clinic were suspended after two days.

In February, we again brought this proof of concept clinic online, in order to administer the 2nd doses of vaccine for those who received their 1st dose in the clinic in January.

During the earlier proof of concept operations, we worked with the Province of Ontario to pilot the developing Provincial Immunization Clinic Registration and Scheduling System.

The complete Provincial immunization clinic registration and scheduling system will be fully deployed, across Ontario, on March 15.

In order to avoid delaying the upcoming launch of City-run clinic operations, I am pleased to advise that we have worked with our Provincial partners to make it possible for eligible Toronto residents, who are 80 years of age or older, to schedule their vaccine appointments, by leveraging the Provincial booking system framework, prior to the full system going live on March 15.

Beginning on March 12, the Province will, once again, bring our initial clinics onto the ongoing booking system pilot, such that eligible residents will be able to schedule their appointments for vaccination without delay.

This builds on our previous proof of concept operations, completed in collaboration with the Province of Ontario.

I want to thank our Provincial partners for making it possible for this to happen, ahead of the full system going live on March 15.

This is happening 2 weeks ahead of the scheduled opening of these clinics and in direct response to increased vaccine availability.

Approximately 133,000 individual appointments will be available in the booking system, between March 17 and April 11, for the 3 initial clinics.

Based on the most recent information from our Toronto Public Health colleagues, this is more than enough appointment capacity for every Toronto resident, who was born in 1941 or earlier, to book an appointment through this booking process.

Additional appointments will become available, in the system, after March 15, as we continue to expand clinic operations in response to the availability of COVID-19 vaccine.

This achieves two important and shared goals.

Firstly, this allows Toronto residents born in 1941 or earlier, to schedule their COVID-19 vaccine appointments in one of the three upcoming clinic locations, without having to delay the commencement of clinic operations.

Secondly, this allows us to bring larger volumes of registration and scheduling traffic online, within the Provincial system, in a methodical manner, ahead of the launch of the full system on March 15.

While the associated call centre functionality will not be available until March 15, eligible Toronto residents will be able to book their vaccination appointments online, beginning March 12.

When the system goes online on March 12, eligible residents will be able to access the booking system by going to [Toronto.ca/COVID-19](https://toronto.ca/COVID-19) and clicking on a registration button that will be prominent on the City's website, taking you into the initial registration system, where your eligibility for vaccination will be confirmed.

You will need to enter the following information as part of the booking process:

- The information found on your Photo Health card;
- Your birth date;
- Your postal code; and
- Your email address and/or your phone number.

The Provincial system will verify your eligibility to book an appointment for vaccination, based on this information, and will then take you to the scheduling system.

You will then be able to enter your Postal Code to find the closest available clinic location, or you can choose to scroll through all the available appointment options.

You will be able to see all of the available appointment dates and times, and will be able to select the available appointment that you prefer.

You are free to select whichever appointment date and time, in whichever clinic you choose.

Once you select and confirm your first dose appointment, you will be asked to select the date and time for your second dose appointment

Once you have selected and confirmed both your 1st and 2nd dose appointments, you will receive a confirmation number and a QR code as confirmation of booking.

Your confirmed information will also be sent to you via email and by text message, if you provided both an email address and phone number during the registration process.

Eligible residents are permitted to have another person book an appointment for them.

You will not need to bring this information with you to the clinic on the day of your appointment, as our clinic staff will be able to locate your appointment in the COVAX-ON system by looking up your information when you arrive on your scheduled date and time.

The system will not permit anyone to schedule multiple appointments – you will only be able to schedule one set of 1st and 2nd dose appointments per person.

As a reminder, the call centre functionality, that will be included with the full Provincial booking system, will not be available until the full system comes online on March 15.

We estimate that on average, you should expect to be inside a city-operated immunization clinic for approximately 30 minutes, from the time you begin the screening and check in process until you are vaccinated and have completed the after-vaccination observation and care process.

As soon as additional vaccine supply permits, we will bring additional clinics online, with the goal of having all 9 of our city-operated clinics up and running as very soon as possible.

Once all 9 clinics are up and running at planned capacity, we will be able to administer more than 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine monthly.

In addition to the 9 city-operated clinics, more than 350 additional clinics are planned across the city, including clinics operated by hospitals, Ontario Healthcare teams, community healthcare partners and pharmacies.

Also, as soon as vaccine permits, primary care providers and family doctors will also be able to administer COVID-19 vaccine.

This is truly a "Team Toronto" effort with all of the partners working together to get us all vaccinated as soon as possible.

In closing, I want to be clear that only Toronto residents, who were born in 1941 or earlier, will be able to book appointments at this time.

In order to avoid placing unnecessary loading on the booking system, we ask those who do not meet those eligibility criteria to avoid trying to access the online booking system until such time as you are eligible for vaccine.

This will help to ensure an efficient and effective booking process for everyone as we move forward.

If you already have a confirmed vaccine appointment in a hospital-operated or healthcare partner-operated clinic, you do not need to schedule anything further as your appointment remains confirmed.

However, if you choose to book an appointment in one of the city-operated clinics, please be sure to cancel your other appointment, in order to avoid missed appointments, so that as many people as possible are able to receive their vaccine as quickly as possible.

If you choose not to book an appointment when the booking system opens, or you are unable to book your appointment for any reason, rest assured your opportunities to book your appointment will continue.

Once you are eligible for vaccination under the Provincial vaccine priority framework, you remain eligible continuously thereafter.

I am asking for the assistance of all Toronto residents in not calling 3-1-1 for assistance with booking COVID-19 vaccine appointments.

Our 3-1-1 staff do not have access to the Provincial booking system and are not able to assist with booking COVID-19 vaccination appointments. After March 15, the Provincial booking call centre will be available by phone.

Finally, please remember that vaccine is not available in city-operated immunization clinics without a confirmed appointment.

Please help us maintain effective clinic loading by not coming to a clinic unless you have a confirmed appointment.

I thank everyone in advance for their continued patience and cooperation.

Please continue to monitor [Toronto.ca/COVID-19](https://toronto.ca/COVID-19) for the most up to date information on Immunizations in Toronto.