

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

March 1, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

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

Good afternoon.

Our coordinated enforcement teams continue to work diligently to enforce the Regulations relating to COVID-19.

This weekend, our enforcement officers continued to monitor compliance with the Reopening Ontario Act.

As a result, 2 charges were laid against the owner and operator of a personal service salon.

Also, 1 charge was laid and a temporary closure order was issued against one restaurant and bar.

Following response and investigation by our Municipal law enforcement officers and Toronto Police officers, 15 charges were laid, over the course of the weekend, as a result of large gatherings on private property and in private residences.

This weekend, Toronto Police also responded to an anti-mask protest at Queens Park, resulting in 2 charges being laid under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act and 1 charge being laid under the Criminal Code.

I would like to extend my thanks to each of our enforcement officers who do their very best to meet the challenges associated with the enforcement of COVID-19 regulations each day.

I am also pleased to provide an update, this afternoon, on immunization task force operations.

Our immunization task force continues to be hard at work, preparing for the arrival of additional vaccine in the coming weeks.

I am pleased to report that we have completed the set-up of 5 of our city-operated COVID-19 immunization clinics, each of which is ahead of schedule.

The clinic locations in the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Malvern Community Centre, Toronto Congress Centre, the Hangar in Downsview Park and now the Scarborough Town Centre locations, have been assembled and are prepared for the commencement of operations, when the time comes.

We are now working on setting up the Mitchell Field location, with the North Toronto Memorial, Carmine Stefano and the Cloverdale Mall locations to follow, shortly thereafter.

The proactive set-up of these clinics is being completed ahead of the anticipated activation date, in order to ensure that the City is ready to respond, as very soon as vaccine is available.

We are also continuing to recruit, onboard and train the nearly 1,400 staff that are required to operate these clinics.

Delivering scalable solutions, has been a fundamental objective for us, from the outset of immunization task force operations.

We are continuing to proactively plan for the potential expansion of immunization clinic operations, should the demand-based need arise, should vaccine availability permit and should the Province of Ontario direct us to do so, at some point in the future.

Scalability and responsiveness are key aspects of any successful incident management system, and these objectives have guided our planning and response since the outset of COVID-19 response in Toronto.

The 9, City-operated, COVID-19 Immunization Clinics form the backbone of the network of city-wide clinics and locations that will eventually be available to residents.

We continue to work in collaboration with the Province of Ontario, and our many healthcare partners, in planning for this eventual network of clinics, which Mayor Tory outlined.

The operational plans, for our 9 city-operated COVID-19 immunization clinics, are informed by the lessons learned during proof-of-concept operations in both January and February.

During the proof of concept clinic, held in the Metro Toronto Convention Centre location, we had the opportunity to evaluate the requirements and functionality of all aspects of clinic operations, including the COVID-19 scheduling system.

The results of these proof of concept evaluations, confirmed that the successful deployment and operation of COVID-19 immunization clinics of this size and scope, in a city as large as Toronto, requires a robust, centrally-coordinated scheduling and registration system.

This need is amplified in consideration of the need to maintain strict compliance with the Provincial Vaccine Prioritization Framework.

Accordingly, our proof of concept observations and lessons learned were shared with our Provincial partners, and we have continued to work closely with the Province to ensure that the system that they will launch on the 15th of March, will meet our collective needs.

I am pleased that the Provincial system is now undergoing pilot evaluations, in a number of smaller jurisdictions in Ontario, in preparation for Province-wide launch later this month.

The approval of the Astra-Zeneca COVID-19 vaccine by the Government of Canada, brings with it excitement and hope for an expedited roll-out of vaccine across Toronto.

We are working every day with our Provincial partners, to ensure that we are able to make vaccines available, to everyone who wishes to receive one, as very soon as possible.

The City asks that residents not call 3-1-1 to inquire about booking vaccine appointments at this time, and that they not attend any of the clinic facilities, until such time as they have a confirmed appointment.

As vaccines become available, information will be shared about prioritization and how to book an appointment.

The work of our Immunization Task Force is ongoing 7 days per week in our city, and we won't stop until we have completed our mission and until COVID-19 is behind us.

I thank everyone for their continued patience as the situation with vaccine availability continues to evolve.

I continue to encourage everyone to monitor www.toronto.ca/covid-19 for the most accurate and up to date information relating to both COVID-19 response and vaccine in Toronto.

Thank you.