

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

March 24, 2021 at 10 a.m.

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

On Monday March 22, the Province of Ontario extended vaccine eligibility to those 75 years of age and older.

At 08:00 that morning, the Provincial booking system went live with the enhanced eligibility.

On Monday, 18,649 people booked their appointments for vaccination.

Yesterday, another 3,381 people booked their appointments.

With the increased supply of COVID-19 vaccine becoming available, we have been able to increase the capacity of our clinics as of this week.

Based on the forecasted vaccine allotments, we will continue to increase our weekly capacity moving forward.

The city-operated clinics inside the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, Scarborough Town Centre and the Toronto Congress Centre continue to operate this week with increased numbers of vaccines being administered daily.

As you know, we encountered some challenges on Monday that resulted in longer than normal line lengths, wait times and processing times within our clinics.

Our objective is always to find the optimum balance between maximizing the number of vaccines that we deliver each day, with the need to provide a positive client experience for everyone who is vaccinated in our clinics.

Our clinic operations team and Immunization Task Force Command team worked long into the night on Monday night, ensuring that we put the necessary changes in place to address the concerns.

We have increased the staffing levels in our clinics, including adding clinical staff delivering vaccines, adding clinic support staff who complete all the check-in, after-care and check-out process, and added a number of additional first responders to ensure that incoming clients are well served.

We now provide chairs for waiting clients, drinking water along with regular interaction with our line management and first response staff who ensure that needs are efficiently met.

We added a command officer from fire services and a superintendent from Paramedics in each clinic, directly supporting our clinic managers.

We have emailed everyone with a confirmed appointment, to confirm their appointment times and to recommend that they arrive 15 minutes prior.

Each of these enhancements was implemented over night and I am very pleased to report that operations on Tuesday were smooth and without any wait or line issues.

I had the opportunity to personally meet with a number of folks as they were going into and coming out of our clinic on Tuesday and all of the feedback provided was nothing less than exceptional.

As of this morning, we have expanded services inside the Toronto Congress Centre such that there is indoor space available for people to wait, as opposed to having to wait outdoors.

Likewise, our team is working on implementing similar solutions at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

We are also working hard to create viable solutions at the Scarborough Town Centre location as well, although this is a more challenging task, as additional space is not readily available.

Our teams will continue this work with earnest until we have these provisions in place.

I want to thank each and every client, who are arriving for their confirmed appointment 15 minutes prior.

This greatly assist us in ensuring that your experience is both timely and efficient.

I also thank everyone for limiting the number of support people that they bring with them to the clinic, by bringing only those necessary to assist them in moving through the clinic.

Finally, I continue to encourage anyone who requires a mobility device, such as a walker or wheelchair, to bring their device with them for their vaccine appointment, wherever possible.

We have increased the number of mobility devices we have on site, along with increasing the number of trained healthcare professionals and emergency first

responders on site who available to help anyone who requires assistance in moving through the process.

On March 29, we will open additional clinics inside the Malvern Community Centre and the Mitchell Field Community Centre.

As of April 5, the clinic location inside the Hangar in Downsview Park will also come online.

And finally, after April 12, our final three city-operated mass immunization clinics – North Toronto Memorial Community Centre, Carmine Stefano Community Centre and Cloverdale Mall will coming online.

This of course is all dependent on the continued availability of vaccine.

We are thrilled to be working alongside the East Toronto Health Partners in the launch of the partnership-based, mass immunization clinic in the Thorncliffe Park Community Hub.

Beginning today, this mass immunization clinic will provide much-welcomed additional clinic capacity, and will enable us to collectively evaluate a different clinic operating model.

This clinic has been designed, and will be operated by our East Toronto Health Partners, in a format whereby clients remain in one place, with the various aspects of the immunization clinic process coming to them.

Further, we are very pleased to be working with our East Toronto Health Partners to evaluate the effectiveness of extended clinic operating hours in this location.

I offer my thanks to the East Toronto Health Partners for their leadership, partnership and collaboration as we work together to maximize the administration of vaccines across Toronto.

This clinic is available for booking on the Provincial booking system now.

In closing, I remind everyone that vaccinations are only available by appointment and are not available on a walk-in basis.

I strongly encourage everyone who was born in 1946 or earlier to make your appointment for vaccination now.

If you have an Ontario photo health card, you can book using the online registration system, which can be accessed 24 hours per day at toronto.ca/covid19.

If you prefer to book by phone, the Provincial call- centre can be accessed by calling 1-888-999-6488.

The Provincial call centre is available from 8 a.m. through 8 p.m., seven days per week.

There are a number of appointments still available this week, including this coming weekend.

Please do not contact 311 nor Toronto Public Health for assistance in booking your COVID-19 vaccination appointment as our staff are not able to access the COVAX system on your behalf.

Please continue to monitor toronto.ca/COVID-19 for the most up to date information on Immunizations in Toronto.

Thank you.