

Update on COVID-19

Chief Pegg, Fire Chief & General Manager of Emergency Management

April 12, 2020 at 4 p.m.

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

Before I begin my formal remarks this afternoon, I would like to acknowledge that this is National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

24 hours a day and 7 days per week, our 9-1-1 operators and our Police, Fire and Paramedics Services call takers and dispatchers are on the very front lines of emergency response.

These dedicated people are the calm and professional voices that residents and visitors hear, on the other end of the phone, during their time of emergency.

Likewise, it is this team of professionals who are such a vital link to both first responders and incident commanders every day.

This is demanding, difficult and very stressful work and I both acknowledge and thank each and every member of our team for all they do in the name of public safety.

As of 11:00 this morning, we successfully opened three additional City-operated COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

Our newest clinics at Cloverdale mall, North Toronto Memorial Community Centre and Carmine Stefano Community Centre are now in operation, delivering 2,680 doses of vaccine each day, between the three of them.

Only a few short weeks ago, on March 17, we opened the first three City-operated clinics, weeks ahead of the original target of April 1.

And now, our full network of nine clinics is running seven days per week.

I am so proud and appreciative of our extraordinary teams, who have worked day and night to make the clinics a reality.

It requires a team of nearly 1,400 people to operate our network of clinics and I want to thank each and every member of the team who continue to give so much.

Beginning today, we are able to administer 56,322 doses of COVID-19 vaccine each week, across the network of nine City-operated vaccine clinics.

While this is a very significant number of people being vaccinated each week in our clinics, this is only a portion of what we are capable of delivering.

We are intentionally scaling our clinic operations, in order to protect vaccine allotment for our Hospital and Ontario Health Team partners as well, such that their clinic operations are also able to continue to the largest extent possible.

As we have from the outset, we are matching the number of available appointments each day with the number of doses of vaccine that are available.

At present, our network of 9 city-operated vaccine clinics are able to administer approximately 56,000 doses of vaccine per week.

Assuming that vaccine availability increases in the weeks and months to come, as the Province forecasts that it will, we look forward to being able to administer more than twice the number of vaccines we are administering in our City-operated vaccine clinics at present.

Demand for appointments in City-operated vaccine clinics continues to be very high.

All nine of our City-operated clinics are fully booked all of this week, and many clinics are now fully booked into May, with bookings happening steadily each day.

Between 8:00 this morning and 3:00 this afternoon, another 17,640 first dose appointments had been booked in City-operated vaccine clinics.

If you are eligible to receive vaccine, I encourage you to book your appointment without delay.

All nine of our clinics are now operating from 11 a.m. through 8 p.m., seven days per week.

Our clinics continue to run smoothly, with little to no wait for those who arrive at their scheduled appointment times.

Most people are checked in, vaccinated and checked out in about 30 minutes.

Our team of first responders and healthcare professionals are there to provide any assistance that may be required.

You are encouraged to bring and wear your own mask throughout your time at the clinic.

We are happy to supply a mask to anyone that requires one.

We also have processes in place to assist any clients who are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons.

The Province of Ontario has extended vaccine eligibility for teachers, who either live or work in designated hotspot neighbourhoods.

The Province of Ontario is working directly with the school boards, in order to implement these changes and provide information on how eligible teachers can get vaccinated.

As of 8:00 this morning, eligible education workers, who received a letter through from their school board, are able to book their vaccine appointments by calling the Provincial Call Centre at 1-888-999-6488.

Likewise, the Province of Ontario has also extended vaccine eligibility for all those 18 years of age or older, but only when attending a mobile or pop-up vaccine clinic in a designated hotspot neighbourhood.

This eligibility does not extend to clinics booked through the Provincial Booking System, nor at any of the City-operated vaccine clinics, at this time.

Mobile and pop-up clinics are coordinated directly by the Ontario COVID-19 Healthcare Leadership Table and are operated by our Hospital and Ontario Health Team partners, as vaccine availability permits.

While endeavour to share all the Team Toronto efforts, our partners intentionally promote these location-specific, mobile clinics to the specific sites and communities that the clinic is meant to serve.

Generally speaking, pop-up and mobile clinics are brought to the attention of eligible clients directly by primary care physicians, employers, building managers, faith leaders and other local leaders, who are directly connected with those for whom these clinics will serve.

These types of mobile clinics are located in specific locations, determined by the Healthcare Leadership Table, in order to expedite the provision of COVID-19 vaccine within high-risk neighbourhoods, rather than attendees from outside those communities.

In response to the rising COVID-19 case counts, hospital and ICU admissions, our emergency operations centre is continuing to proactively manage personal protective equipment, while ensuring that our incident management system continues to support both vaccine clinic operations as well as critical and essential services each day.

I am pleased to report that our PPE inventory is stable and is being managed carefully each day, and our Incident Management System continues to operate 24 hours per day, in support of all frontline and vaccine clinic operations.

In closing, I encourage all eligible residents to book their vaccine appointments without delay, by accessing toronto.ca/COVID-19 or by accessing the Provincial Call Centre at 1-888-999-6488.

Please do not contact 3-1-1 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.

Finally, please continue to monitor toronto.ca/COVID-19 for the most up to date information on vaccinations in Toronto.

Thank you.