

**Update on COVID-19**  
**Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health**  
**Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen Street West**  
**October 12, 2021 at 2 p.m.**

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- Thank you Mayor Tory, and good afternoon.
- Later this afternoon, Toronto Public Health will update its vaccination dashboard, capturing the new first and second vaccine doses administered in Toronto over the Thanksgiving long weekend. As you've just heard from the Mayor, as of October 11, 86.6 per cent of Toronto's eligible population has received one dose of vaccine, and 82.1 per cent has received two doses.
- I am grateful to the people of Toronto for the effort they have made to ensure that they, their friends and their loved ones are protected from the worst effects of COVID-19 by being fully vaccinated.
- I want to remind us all that this is the largest vaccination campaign in history – and a campaign that we are working on seven days a week – in the largest city in Canada and the fourth largest city in North America.
- The vaccination campaign began in Toronto in December 2020 – just over 10 months ago – with doses being administered by Toronto's hospital partners to frontline hospital workers and individuals in long-term care.
- The first City-run immunization clinics opened in March 2021. And in eight short months, Team Toronto has delivered 4,801,730 doses and managed to reach Torontonians not once, but twice, to ensure Toronto gets fully vaccinated.
- This is truly exceptional.
- One may ask, how did we do this?
- Well first, by leveraging data, bringing vaccines to every Toronto resident in every corner of the city as quickly as possible, and with an equity lens.

- We've partnered with you, members of the media, to ensure that factual and timely information was communicated to members of the public.
- We've door knocked and partnered with hundreds of community, hospital and health care organizations.
- We've made calls, sent texts, and held town halls to answer questions.
- We have brought clinics to workplaces, arenas, shelters, libraries, subway stops, drop-in centres, and retirement communities -- to the front doors of where people live and to the neighbourhoods in which people work.
- We are not only continuing to do this work, but we are doubling down on what we know works while continuously monitoring uptake and adjusting our strategies.
- This work by Toronto Public Health and our partners is being done in the context of a global pandemic, while people are experiencing a full range of emotions: fear, anxiety, frustration, grief, boredom and isolation, amongst many others.
- This work is being done, as well, as Toronto Public Health continues to limit the spread of COVID-19, to investigate cases and contacts, and continue other critical public health programs.
- I think it is important to remember our unique Toronto context. Toronto is a vibrant, world-class, metropolitan city, often cited as the most diverse city in the world, with nearly half of its population born outside of Canada, with over 200 ethnic groups present and over 140 languages spoken.
- Toronto's population also moves, grows and shifts through immigration, student influx and outflow, population migration for employment, and due to a variety of other factors.
- This is what makes Toronto thrive and what makes our city so special.

- This reality also makes our task in relation to this immunization campaign – the largest in our history – more complex.
- And we are meeting the challenge – by creating trusting relationships and mobilizing at the local level.
- When you compare Toronto to other similar metropolitan centres – you can see that we are indeed succeeding in our vaccination efforts.
- For example, as of Friday, October 8, compared to New York City, Chicago and London, England – Toronto's entire population has the highest fully vaccinated rate.
- Still – what can we do to drive our vaccination rate even higher?
- I can tell you, that Toronto Public Health along with our various partners are going to continue to do all we can to bring vaccines to every corner of our city.
- And you have a role too. Every member of the public – whether fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated or still deciding – has a spot on Team Toronto.
- Today, aside from rolling up your sleeves, let me offer two different ways to support the City-wide vaccination efforts.
- First – if you a member or are part of an organization – whether it's a workplace, a faith group, or a sporting organization – there are resources on our website which you can use to help support and develop vaccination policy and to promote vaccination uptake.
- Also, I would ask that you please reach out to us at Toronto Public Health to express an interest in hosting vaccination clinics.
- Second – if you are a Toronto resident who received your vaccination outside of Ontario, please ensure that it is captured in the provincial system by

Toronto Public Health. Again, there is a form on our website, [Toronto.ca/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/COVID19), to help you with this process.

- This vaccination campaign is a huge undertaking and our whole City is rising to the task at hand.
- We will continue to do everything in our power, and use every tool at our disposal to increase vaccination amongst all those who are eligible.
- We know that vaccination is the key to putting this pandemic behind us.
- This holds true for protecting our schools. As you will likely have heard, Toronto Public Health has recommended that all students be dismissed from in-person classes and activities at Silverthorn Collegiate Institute as of this morning.
- This is the first whole school dismissal in Toronto for the current 2021-2022 school year.
- In the course of our investigation, we found that there are currently 11 confirmed COVID-19 cases at the school, nine of which are linked to student-to-student transmission.
- All cases are currently in the student population, and several of these cases were newly reported over the weekend.
- We have also found that there was potential transmission at multi-grade events, activities and social gatherings, inside and outside of the school.
- To limit any additional exposures, whole-school testing has been recommended and arranged, and we will continue to investigate and make recommendations to return to in-person classes and activities as soon as possible.
- In addition, as we know that current vaccine coverage for eligible youth in this particular community sits at around 70 to 75 per cent, we are ensuring that



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mobile vaccination clinic opportunities are available to students, staff, school administration and their families this week.

- Vaccination, along with measures of personal protection, are the best tools at our disposal to protect ourselves, our families, our communities, and our thriving city.
- And with that, I will turn to Councillor Cressy to deliver his remarks.

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