

Looking back, he wished that when Dr. Theresa Tam “started telling us about the potential of the concerning news coming out in January, coming out of China, we would have immediately turned around and started to procure lots of PPE,” Trudeau told CITY-TV.

“At the beginning of the pandemic in March and April, where they were real concerns about front-line health workers who were reusing masks and having to bring them home and wash them, that was something that I would have loved to have been able to avoid.”

Canada has since acquired more than 2 billion pieces of PPE “so we’re fine now, but in those first months, I think we needed to be readier and we’re going to make sure that going forward, Canada is never caught without equipment to protect our front-line workers again,” he said.

“There’s lots of things we’ve learned, but one of the things we learned through the scramble on PPE was to be early on vaccines.”

Vaccination in many provinces is underway already after Health Canada gave its first approval to a COVID-19 vaccine made by Pfizer/BioNTech.

On Wednesday, deputy chief public health officer Dr. Howard Njoo said regulators are expected to make a decision on a second vaccine, produced by Massachusetts-based Moderna, “in the near future.”

The Moderna vaccine is highly anticipated because it does not have the same ultracold storage requirements as Pfizer’s, which must be used within six hours once it is thawed and mixed. Moderna’s vaccine can be stored at -20C and is stable once thawed for about 30 days at regular refrigerator temperatures.

Canada has purchased 40 million doses from Moderna, and expects delivery of up to 168,000 doses before the end of December, conditional on Health Canada approval. Deliveries could begin within 48 hours of regulatory authorization.

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