



## NEWS

## COVID-19 vaccinations start today at local long-term care facilities

First allotment of vaccines expected to be administered as early as end of week

By [Sarah Hyatt](#) Northumberland News

Wednesday, January 27, 2021

It's a historic day for local communities as the first COVID-19 vaccines will start going into arms of area long-term care residents today.

Earlier this week, the [Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit](#) confirmed the first batch of vaccines – [700 doses of the Moderna vaccine](#) – for the Northumberland, Kawartha and Haliburton areas.

“This is the day we have been waiting for,” said Dr. Ian Gemmill, the health unit’s acting medical officer of health, following confirmation of the region’s first shipment, which did arrive earlier than anticipated. (Previous reports indicated the vaccine would arrive in early February.)

Several more shipments will still be needed – including more doses to achieve that “iron ring” around LTC and high-risk retirement home facilities. (Under just LTC, the region has about 1,600 residents and 2,000-plus staff in these facilities.)

As for the first doses here, Gemmill said it’s expected the first allotment of vaccine will be administered as early as end of week.

LTC residents at the Hope Street Terrace in Port Hope, Brighton’s Maplewood facility, and the Pinecrest Nursing Home in Bobcaygeon, are among the first groups being vaccinated. With public health staff working alongside LTC staff, vaccinations for the residents of these facilities started Wednesday, Jan. 27.

“...I am extremely excited and relieved that the vaccines are going to be given,” said Dr. Michelle Albert, medical director of the Hope Street Terrace and an attending physician there, who after a long few weeks in outbreak, was especially looking forward to seeing her precious patients vaccinated Wednesday. “I will then just be holding my breath until a week after the second dose is received as the residents will still be vulnerable to infection until that point.”

“I am very happy, though, that the process is hopefully starting soon, and hopeful that they will have some degree of protection within 10 days, which is obviously better than none at all.”

In recent weeks, Albert, among other LTC staff, on behalf of the Hope Street Terrace, have been pleading for vaccines while [battling a COVID-19 outbreak at the 97-bed facility](#).

As previously reported, the local health unit is following provincial direction for vaccine rollout – and there were recent changes under Phase 1 of Ontario’s vaccination program. Such changes include a shift/revised goal to have all residents of LTC and high-risk retirement homes vaccinated by Feb. 5 (previous goal was Feb. 15.)

## Related content

---

### First batch of COVID-19 vaccine arrives at local health unit

As a result, at the local level, the goal is to also vaccinate all residents of LTC and high-risk retirement homes, as well as a seniors' housing facility in Alderville, by that Feb. 5th date, Gemmill explained.

"The health unit is committed to vaccinating as many of these residents as possible with the vaccine provided. Based on vaccine availability, the health unit is working with these facilities to schedule clinic dates this week and next week (and in the coming weeks and so on, anticipating more vaccines are coming.)"

The residents of the high-risk facilities are being done first, but inoculation will continue until "all residents of long-term care homes and high-risk retirement homes have been immunized."

When prioritizing facilities, a number of factors are weighed, Gemmill has said. Among the considerations are the incidence rate of the area, as well as outbreaks, and whether vaccines could be used in those instances to protect residents who may be at increased risk because of an outbreak in another wing or unit of a facility, he said.

This week's shipment went to Ross Memorial Hospital, which currently has a freezer to store the vaccines in; health unit staff will shuttle doses this week from there to HKPR communities.

The health unit is supposed to get its own freezer for the Moderna vaccine in the near future (tentatively end of January/start of February, though no date confirmed yet.) It would be set up at the Port Hope office.

The health unit's draft COVID-19 mass immunization plan – a "significant undertaking" involving a multitude of staff – was submitted to the province last week.

Stay with us for additional vaccination updates.

## Headlines newsletter

---