

interest in people wanting to be vaccinated”, said medical officer of health, Dr. Natalie Bocking. She notes local vaccination clinics are seeing a steady stream of clients and no cancellations.

Still, a good portion of seniors have yet to book an appointment.

Health experts suggest several possible reasons why such a significant portion of Ontario's oldest demographic has yet to join the queue for their COVID-19 vaccinations. These include a reluctance of attending mass-vaccination sites for fear it will increase their contact with others and therefore their risk of contracting the virus, concerns about efficacy rates and side effects of certain brands of vaccine and worries about interaction with their prescribed medications.

The HKPR region - Haliburton and Northumberland counties and Kawartha Lakes - is home to roughly 56,400 residents 65 and older; about 29 per cent of the overall population. As of April 12, 22,059 individuals aged 65 and older had received at least their first dose. This amounts to just over 39 per cent and includes 2,845 residents in long-term care and retirement homes in the region. Nearly all of the latter are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

To boost numbers, the health unit is trying to make it as easy for people to get their COVID-19 vaccination as close to home as possible.

“That is why we are running six mass immunization clinics across the region. Select pharmacies in the area are also pitching in with offering vaccines to people age 55-plus, giving another avenue to get vaccinated,” said Bocking. “HKPRDHU is also looking at other vaccination options, such as offering mobile and pop-up vaccination clinics, working with local EMS/paramedics to provide vaccines to people who are housebound, and partnering with pharmacists and primary care providers to deliver more vaccines.”

Peterborough Public Health medical officer of health Dr. Rosana Salvaterra stated 22.1 per cent of the population in her health unit’s catchment area - which includes an estimated 47,222 adults who are 60 and older - have received at least a single dose of vaccine.

However, she suggests the lower than hoped numbers have less to do with people balking at getting jabbed, concerns over the safety of vaccines, or transportation challenges.