

COMPREHENSIVE VACCINATION PLAN SET

Continued from page 1

the doses are expected to start arriving this week and will be administered to health-care workers in high-risk settings first, such as long-term care homes and hospitals, followed by the other priority populations.

"We are committed to supporting the Ministry of Health as they execute the largest immunization rollout in a generation," said HHC president and CEO Denise Hardenne. "We are working closely with the provincial government, Halton Region Public Health and our local healthcare partners to operationalize the centre in a safe and secure manner."

According to Halton-area MP Anita Anand — who's also Canada's procurement minister and has overseen the process of securing COVID-19 vaccines for the entire country — local residents can expect to have widespread access to the inoculation by next fall, if all goes well with Health Canada approvals.

"We are on track to receive 249,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine in December, with millions of more doses coming in the new year," she said, noting any Canadian who wishes to be immunized will have access to the vaccine by the end of September 2021.

The federal government has reached bilateral agreements with seven vaccine manufacturers and suppliers, noted Anand, securing up to 414 million doses for the country's population of 38 million.

The Public Health Agency of Canada will distribute the vaccines to provinces and territories on a per capita basis, she said.

Halton's mayors recently took part in a vaccine rollout strategy meeting with provincial officials.

"I want this community to know that we are engaged and keeping apprised as to the development and delivery of the COVID-19 vaccine," said Halton Hills Mayor Rick Bonnette.

The Ontario government has crafted a three-part rollout plan, explained Meghani during December's session of regional council.

"Phase one is estimated to provide over two million doses of the vaccines to priority groups in two pilot sites, followed by an expansion to approximately 21 hospitals across the province," she said.

"As the stock of vaccine increases, phase two of the plan will expand to other priority groups, such as home care patients with chronic conditions, and include an expansion in vaccination sites. Phase three will see the vaccine widely distributed to all Ontarians."

With the two leading vaccines requiring extremely cold temperatures for transport, a north-Halton business known for its FlashFreeze innovation has stepped up to the plate with a potential solution.

"We developed a technology six years ago that uses liquid nitrogen to basically keep very precise cold temperatures well below zero," explained Michael Stuparyk, director of business development at Advanced Test and Automation (ATA). "We thought, maybe we can adapt this technology to help with vaccine cold storage and transport."

ATA is crafting a line of products ranging from a 25-litre portable container to a full-size upright freezer that harness the power of liquid nitrogen to keep vaccines at just the right temperature — from -80 degrees Celsius for the Pfizer vaccine all the way up to +8 degrees Celsius for other future vaccines.

ATA is no stranger to helping out during the pandemic, with the company joining the Canadian ventilator effort in April, making components and testing major modules.

"Shifting our focus to this (freezers) is another way we can continue to help provide engineering resources during the pandemic," said Stuparyk.

While some may contend the vaccines can't possibly be safe due to their quick turnaround time, Anand said she has full confidence in the advice of the experts at Health Canada.

"Their role is to ensure any vaccine that would be distributed is safe and effective for Canadians. All of our contracts are contingent on Health Canada approval of the vaccine," she said. "No vaccine will be distributed without that independent scientific review of the vaccine itself. That provides me with the comfort I need to actually take the vaccine, which I intend to do."

After those who wish to be immunized do so, Meghani said they will still need to follow public health protocols, such as wearing a mask and physical distancing.

"These are early days for this vaccine, and we have a long road ahead to achieving herd immunity and understanding how it protects others," she said. "It's important to remember that our collective efforts remain critical at this time and throughout 2021, and we should not let our guards down."

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: With coronavirus case numbers continuing to rise in Halton and beyond, we took a closer look at when the COVID-19 vaccine will be available for local residents and the steps health officials are taking to prepare for the immunizations.



YOUR INSURANCE HOUSE

Celebrating Over 70 Years as a Family Owned Business

143 Mill Street, Georgetown, Ontario

(905) 877-0133 • 1-800-482-2308

www.pcarmstrongins.com • info@pcarmstrongins.com

Happy
PAUL C. ARMSTRONG
INSURANCE BROKERS INC.
Holidays



50/50 Hospital Lottery

WIN BIG at Georgetown5050.com

Georgetown
Hospital
Foundation
Living. Giving. Caring.

**GUARANTEED MINIMUM
PRIZE OF OVER \$5,000**

Michael Chong

Member of Parliament
Wellington - Halton Hills

Have a Wonderful Christmas Season and a Safe and Happy New Year!

905-702-2597 • 866- 878 5556 | michael.chong@parl.gc.ca
www.michaelchong.ca