

COVID-19 VACCINE CLINICS POISED TO OPEN BY NEXT MONTH

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Plans are underway for Halton's COVID-19 public vaccination clinics, with regional officials striving to open locations in each community in March.

Hundreds of staff are being hired to operate the clinics, Chief Administrative Officer Jane MacCaskill told regional councillors during their Feb. 17 meeting, with 200 new employees slated to start orientation on Feb. 22, and 200 more the following week.

"We are definitely ramped up to be ready to staff the clinics," she said, noting that anywhere from 50 to 100 employees will be needed to staff each location, depending on size and vaccine availability.

"The vaccine supply should increase over the

next number of weeks and months. We are working to be prepared to respond to that and ensure we get vaccines into arms in Halton."

Gellert Community Centre (10241 Eighth Line) will serve as the Halton Hills clinic.

Medical Officer of Health Dr. Hamidah Meghani said Halton Public Health may be able to start immunizing older adults living in the community next month, depending on vaccine supply.

The province has just updated its plans to include those aged 80 and over in Phase 1 of the vaccine rollout. Details are still being finalized on how these residents will be contacted regarding the vaccines.

Phase 1, which began in December, also prioritizes health-care workers, long-term care and retirement

home residents and staff, adult chronic home care recipients and Indigenous adults.

Phase 2, which the province now says will run from April to July, will see 79-year-olds living in the community given priority for the vaccine, decreasing by five-year increments over the course of the rollout.

Front-line workers (such as first responders, education workers, food processing industry workers), those who work in high-risk congregate settings and individuals with high-risk chronic conditions and their caregivers are also listed as part of Phase 2 priorities.

Phase 3 for the remainder of the population that wants to receive the vaccine is slated to begin in August.

Meghani said through-



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Public COVID-19 vaccine clinics are now being set up throughout Halton.

put at Halton's clinics will increase over time and could reach up to 8,000 vaccines administered per day, noting this is dependent on vaccine supply, staffing and clinic operating hours.

MacCaskill said the re-

gion has spent about \$1 million to date procuring items necessary to operate the clinics. Staff is also working on a vaccine scheduling system that residents will be able to use as Halton waits for the province to rollout an On-

tario-wide system.

For further details, visit halton.ca/COVID19.



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