



## MEMO

**TO:** Community Based Physicians  
**FROM:** Dr. Janice Fitzgerald, MD, MPH Chief Medical Officer of Health  
**DATE:** May 3, 2021  
**SUBJECT:** Community Based Physicians Offering COVID-19 Vaccine

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Plans are now underway to expand the COVID-19 immunization program. Vaccine for the program will soon be available for distribution to eligible community based physicians.

The Department of Health and Community Services will be in communication with physicians to advise when they can order COVID-19 vaccine through the regional public health offices as directed in this memo.

### **COVID-19 Measures**

When planning to administer COVID-19 vaccine, physicians are to ensure that public health measures are followed. For the latest information on COVID-19 public health guidance, please visit <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/>. Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is recommended and includes physicians wearing a mask and eye protection and patients wearing a non-medical mask.

PPE and vaccine supplies will be provided to all physicians administering COVID-19 immunizations. PPE kits can be ordered through Headway NL by emailing [orders@headwaynl.com](mailto:orders@headwaynl.com) or calling 1-855-878-9773. A standard PPE kit from Headway includes 50 level 2+ masks, 10 face shields, 1 box of medium gloves, 1 box large gloves, and 10 gowns. For more information on ordering PPE kits from Headway, please refer to their memo below.

As a guide for ordering PPE, one eight-hour shift with one immunizer would need five masks and one shield. This will allow a change of mask during breaks and lunch and additional masks if one becomes wet or soiled. For more information on PPE and pandemic measures, refer to the attached document, [Clinic Guidance for COVID-19 Immunization](#).

COVID-19 immunizations will require pre-booking appointments for the first dose. If required, pre-booking for the second dose should be done at the same time or at time of administration of first dose. Specific information about dosing timeframes for COVID-19 vaccine can be found here: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/resources-for-health-care-professionals/>. Avoiding wastage of COVID-19 vaccine is an important consideration to factor into clinic planning.

## **Recommended Recipients for COVID-19 Immunization**

Priority groups for COVID-19 immunization in NL can be found here:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/prioritygroups/>

The sequence of priority groups for vaccine administration may need to change as COVID-19 epidemiology and vaccine logistics in Newfoundland and Labrador evolve. The Department of Health and Community Services will be in communication with physicians to advise on priority groups as we move forward through the phased approach.

Immunizers administering the COVID-19 vaccine are eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Public Health in the Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) have sent information to physicians to schedule first dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

## **Special Populations for COVID-19 Vaccination**

Newfoundland and Labrador's COVID-19 immunization program is following the recommendations from NACI on the use of vaccines for special populations including individuals who are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment, individuals with an autoimmune condition, individuals who are pregnant or breastfeeding and adolescents 12 to 15 years of age.

Updated information on special populations can be found here: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/resources-for-health-care-professionals/special-populations/>

## **Vaccine Products**

The COVID-19 vaccines provided to physicians will be stored and transported at 2° to 8° C. The process for storage and transportation of COVID-19 vaccines provided to physicians will be similar to the processes carried out for the Influenza vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccine products used by physicians within NL will be based on current product availability. Product monographs, handling and storage requirements and other information related to the COVID vaccines being used in NL can be found here: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/resources-for-health-care-professionals/>

Please refer to the product monographs and National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) statements to note product-specific age indications, precautions, contraindications and shelf life. Note that each vaccine may have different expiry and usage indications after the vial is punctured.

## **National Advisory Committee on Immunization**

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has developed recommendations for the use of COVID-19 vaccines. For more information, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html>

The Department of Health and Community services will provide information on the storage and handling of COVID-19 vaccines. These recommendations may vary slightly

from the NACI recommendations. In these cases, the Department of Health and Community Services has performed necessary due diligence and consulted directly with vaccine product manufacturers to ensure safety and accuracy for provincial guidance.

### **Adverse Events Following Immunization**

All Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFIs) are to be reported to the Regional Medical Officer of Health as soon as possible. For details please refer to:  
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-s1-routine-guidlms-schedules.pdf>

Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) form:  
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/aefi-form-july23-2020-eng.pdf>

### **Vaccine Ordering Process**

The distribution and supply of vaccine will be monitored very closely through the regional health authority (RHA). Communication will come from the Department of Health and Community Services when it is time to order vaccines, including specifics on type of vaccine and an ordering form. **When at all possible, physicians are expected to submit COVID-19 vaccine orders two weeks in advance of scheduled COVID-19 vaccinations.** A full order of vaccine may not always be provided, depending upon the supply received by the province. To prevent waste, it is imperative to adhere to this requirement and do not overstock COVID-19 vaccine.

The Department of Health and Community Services will be in contact with physicians to advise when ordering of vaccine can begin. Once permitted to order, physicians may contact Communicable Disease Control staff in the following areas to arrange.

<b>EASTERN HEALTH</b>	
Mount Pearl Square Vaccine Depot Telephone: 752-4886 Fax: 752-4873	Holyrood Vaccine Depot Telephone: 229-1572 Fax: 229-1589
<b>CENTRAL HEALTH</b>	
Telephone: 292-8881 Fax: 651-6483	
<b>WESTERN HEALTH</b>	
Telephone: 784-5417 Fax: 637-5160	
<b>LABRADOR-GRENFELL HEALTH</b>	
Telephone: 454-0375 Fax: 454-4978	

## **Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Monitoring**

The COVID-19 vaccines provided to community based physicians will be transported and stored at 2° to 8°C. COVID-19 vaccine storage, transport and cold chain monitoring will be similar to the monitoring of Influenza vaccine.

Vaccine temperature, storage, handling and shipping requirements **must** be adhered to at all times. Vaccine viability may be compromised if not stored properly. Insulated coolers and sufficient supply of ice packs will be required when picking up vaccine. Vaccine will not be released without proper cooling containers for transportation to clinics.

Strict adherence to vaccine stability will be required within your clinic setting. Detailed storage and handling guidelines for COVID-19 vaccines can be found at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/files/COVID-19-Vaccine-shipping-and-receiving-March-16-2021.pdf>. Please check the website frequently for any updates.

You may also visit section 7.3 of the NL Immunization Manual:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-im-section7-biological-products.pdf>

## **COVID-19 Administration Data Entry**

Particularly with COVID-19 vaccination, the timely and accurate reporting of COVID-19 immunizations is extremely valuable to Public Health.

- Immunization data is used in vaccine planning activities to inform how and where to direct valuable vaccine resources.
- Detailed information allows public health to quickly identify populations where vaccine uptake may be low and target education and awareness campaigns to those areas.
- Your reporting will assist in compiling regional, provincial and federal reports and allow us to meet important program goals such as knowing what percentage of our population has been immunized.
- The immunization data is linked to our COVID case reporting database, allowing public health to study vaccine effectiveness and breakthrough disease.
- Complete and timely COVID-19 immunization data is important evaluate and present and future public health measures.
- Electronic immunizations data will feed into HealthNL. Starting in June 2021, providers will be able to view vaccination records and be able to offer appropriate vaccine product and appropriate dose interval when a patient presents to a clinic for second dose.
- Vaccine product information and lot numbers may need to be accessed quickly in the event of a vaccine recall.

Physicians have a responsibility to ensure proper documentation of COVID-19 vaccine administration. The expectation is that all COVID-19 immunizations are documented as record level data within EMR. An EMR light solution has been

created by NLCHI to assist physicians who do not currently use the EMR.

For physicians without EMR and unable to use EMR light, additional information on process of ordering paper consent forms will be communicated in the coming weeks, before vaccines are distributed.

## PPE Ordering Information from Headway



Email: [orders@headwaynl.com](mailto:orders@headwaynl.com)  
Phone: 1-855-878-9773

### Standard PPE Kit for administering COVID-19 immunizations

**Contents:**

50	Level 2+ Masks
10	Face Shields
box	Med Gloves
box	large Gloves
10	Gowns

If the clinic kit becomes depleted, an additional kit can be ordered using the email above. As a guide for ordering PPE, one eight-hour shift with one immunizer would need five masks and one shield. This will allow a change of mask during breaks and lunch and additional masks if one becomes wet or soiled. For more information on PPE and pandemic measures, refer to the attached document, **Clinic Guidance for COVID-19 Immunization During Pandemic.**

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Headway Office, 1 King Street, Placentia A0B 2Y0  
1-855-878-9773 [jane@headwaynl.com](mailto:jane@headwaynl.com)

## **References & Resources:**

Phase 1, 2 & 3 COVID-19 Vaccine Priority Groups in NL  
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/prioritygroups/>

Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines  
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/get-the-facts/>

Special Populations for COVID-19 Vaccination: Individuals who are pregnant, breastfeeding, immunosuppressed, or have an autoimmune condition.  
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/resources-for-health-care-professionals/special-populations/>

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccine  
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/faqs/>

Department of Health & Community Services COVID-19 Website, Resources for Healthcare Professionals  
<https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/vaccine/resources-for-health-care-professionals/>

National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Recommendations on the Use of COVID-19 Vaccines  
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html>