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**COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force**

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Groupe d'étude de la distribution des vaccins contre la COVID-19

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DATE: July 9, 2021

TO: Ontario Medical Association
Primary Care Collaborative

FROM: Patrick Dicerni, Assistant Deputy Minister
Dr. Homer Tien, Chair, COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force

SUBJECT: Youth COVID-19 Vaccine Administration in Primary Care

As the first access point to health care for most Ontarians, and the largest point of contact between Ontarians and the broader health care system, primary care plays a critical role in Ontario's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan. To date, primary care physicians and teams in over 700 primary care and community settings have been administering COVID-19 vaccines in primary care offices, pop-up clinics and temporary locations in an effort to make it easier for Ontarians to access vaccines in their communities.

As a greater proportion of the adult and youth population is vaccinated and planning regarding the wind down of mass vaccination clinics progresses the role of primary care in Ontario's vaccination efforts will only increase. The long-established patient-provider relationships that primary care holds are especially important in targeted outreach to those who have yet to be immunized. Primary care providers have a key role to play in providing education, and addressing any concerns regarding COVID-19 vaccines. Although Ontario has seen positive participation in our Youth Vaccine Campaign, with over 60% having received a single dose as of June 28, 2021, our provincial goal is to have 70-80% of this population fully vaccinated by the time school starts in the fall.

Currently, Pfizer-BioNTech remains the only COVID-19 vaccine that has been approved by Health Canada for use in individuals 12 and over. On May 18th, 2021, select public health units began providing the Pfizer vaccine to individuals aged 12 and over in pop-up and mobile clinics. Shortly after, on May 23rd, 2021, all youth in Ontario, aged

12 and over became eligible to book an appointment to receive Pfizer in various clinic settings including mass clinics and pharmacies. Select public health units also started allocating Pfizer to primary care to offer vaccines to youth in their practices.

The upcoming school year and the province's gradual reopening, in combination with the presence of the delta variant in certain regions, make the vaccination of youth more important than ever. Vaccinating youth is integral to Ontario's overall vaccine strategy as it not only provides greater protection to the broader community, but also serves as an important step in getting children back to the activities that are fundamental to their growth and development – namely in-person learning, extra-curriculars, and time with their friends and family.

The Ontario Medical Association and the Primary Care Collaborative are well positioned to reach out to primary care physicians in a unified and impactful way. We are asking the OMA and the PCC to issue a call out to primary care physicians to make a concerted effort to reach out to the youth and families of their communities with messaging on the importance of getting vaccinated and offers of support to answer questions and address concerns related to getting vaccinated.

To support youth vaccination efforts, a resource guide specific to this population has been developed that includes guidance on vaccine safety, preparing for an appointment, and an updated consent form. We are encouraging primary care providers to continue to work collaboratively with their local public health units and school boards to ensure the successful implementation of this program. Additional information on the administration of COVID-19 vaccines in youth in Ontario can be found [here](#).

Sincerely,



Patrick Dicerni
Assistant Deputy Minister
Ministry of Health



Homer Tien, MD, M.Sc., FACS, FRCSC
Chair, COVID-19 Vaccine
Distribution Task Force

- c: Dr. David Price, Chair, Provincial Primary Care Advisory Table
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery
Dr. Robin Williams, Special Advisor and Chair of Clinical Advisory Working Group
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