

January 14, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year! We hope you were able to take some well-deserved time to relax over the holidays. In this update we cover:

- [COVID-19 update](#)
- [Offloading of work onto Family Doctors](#)



COVID-19 update

Some caveats to the information below:

- *Information about COVID-19 immunization in BC is changing all the time, depending on vaccine availability from vendors, the Federal Government, and BCCDC. So, best to focus on the high-level trends in the information below as opposed to specifics.*
- *Vaccine distribution in BC is tightly controlled by the Ministry. This process is being tightly managed to ensure no wastage, and to focus on delivery to targeted, priority groups. A consequence of this may be that vaccine distribution appears “slow” or uncoordinated (e.g. vaccination staff going for long periods without seeing people, or running through “fill-ins” at the end of the day who may not be part of a high-priority group, or conversely not doing fill-ins at the end of the day).*

Timeline for COVID-19 immunizations for Family Physicians

December to February (27–33,000 individuals across Island Health)

- Staff and physicians in Long-Term Care and Assisted Living
- Residents in Long-Term Care and Assisted Living
- Individuals awaiting placement to LTC and Assisted Living
- Essential Visitors to LTC
- Remote and isolated Indigenous communities (8 identified by FNHA)
- Indigenous communities experiencing clusters
- Staff and physicians who work in hospital COVID units, ICUs and EDs (starting approximately January 21). Other acute care staff and physicians will also start receiving immunizations during this period, though no specific timeframe has been identified. You will receive an email survey to your Island Health email and/or the personal email registered with Island Health asking you about your interest in getting the vaccine. You will then be scheduled.
- Paramedics (starting approximately January 21)

February to March (88-108,000 individuals across Island Health)

- Individuals from Phase 1 who haven't yet received their first dose.
- 2nd dose for individuals within 35-42 days who have received their first dose
- Seniors in the community over the age of 80
- Indigenous elders over the age of 65 (not captured in Phase 1)
- People experiencing homelessness and underserved populations
- People in congregate living (supportive housing, mental health residential care, mental health tertiary clients, correctional facilities and group homes)
- Long-term home support clients and Home Care staff
- Family physicians and nurse practitioners in the community
- Remaining health care staff
- Remaining Indigenous communities not vaccinated in Phase 1

Vaccination of office staff

- We are advocating to have MOAs and other front-line staff working in community offices included with "Community GPs", however, we do not have a response yet from the Ministry. As soon as we do we will let you know.

Patient vaccination

- Minister Dix has indicated that general population vaccination will begin in April. At this time, we are working with Island Health to develop a plan for community roll-out via Family Physicians.
- As you can imagine, there are many moving parts. We hope to be able to share something tangible with you in the next week or two.

Resources for patient-facing information

- **DoBC toolkit** [updated January 8]. The toolkit contains information for doctors to address questions about the COVID-19 vaccine and includes: script for voice mail message, web information and patient Qs and As.
https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/sites/default/files/vaccine_toolkit_jan06_id_392322.pdf
- **Island Health website/Medical Staff site** <https://medicalstaff.islandhealth.ca/covid-19>.
- **BCCDC site:** bccdc.ca/covid19vaccine



Offloading of work onto Family Doctors

Pre-ops

- Thank you to everyone who filled out the survey question
Do you believe that the preop requirement for every surgery is necessary and a good use of patient and provider time?
- 76% of you felt that Pre-ops for every surgery are NOT necessary/a good use of patient and provider time.
- Next week we will meet with Island Health to discuss pre-ops and what options are available during the pandemic to reduce the pressures on scarce in-person appointments.

Like you, we are challenged by all of the unknowns when it comes to community vaccination. We hope, however, to have more information in the next 1-2 weeks that we can share so that you can start planning what April will look like.

Regards,

Drs Jaron Easterbrook and Aaron Childs
Co-Chairs, Greater Victoria COVID Community Task Group