

First COVID-19 Vaccination in LGL

MEDIA RELEASE:

Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit

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The shipment of COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine to Kingston Health Science Centre (KHSC) this week marks the beginning of Phase 1 of the provincial vaccine rollout in the South East region, including Leeds, Grenville and Lanark. The province initially provided COVID-19 vaccine to areas with the highest rates of COVID-19 infection. It is important to note that some areas in Ontario started receiving vaccine before the South East region. These areas are further along in their vaccine distribution. Our region will catch up as vaccine becomes more available.

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit is working closely with Kingston Health Science Centre and other neighbouring health units to ensure efficient distribution of vaccine to staff, residents and essential caregivers in long-term care homes, as well as in higher-risk retirement homes. The first long-term care workers from the LGL region to receive the COVID-19 vaccine were immunized yesterday at Kingston Health Science Centre. The health care workers were excited and grateful to be getting the vaccine to help protect themselves and the residents in their care.

The provincial government has set a target of vaccinating 100% of willing staff, residents, and essential caregivers in long-term care homes and higher-risk retirement homes by February 15, 2021. By immunizing and protecting people in these priority groups and those who provide care for them, we will decrease the risk of COVID-19, and outbreaks, among those who are at greatest risk of serious COVID-19 infection.

The Health Unit will also begin the roll out of mobile clinics to local long-term care homes and higher risk retirement homes over the next week. These mobile clinics will be delivered in partnership with our homes, Emergency Medical Services and healthcare partners who have offered to support COVID-19 vaccination distribution in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark.

"I am very pleased to see the first COVID-19 immunizations happen in LGL, and am proud of all of the hard work to get to this point," states Dr. Paula Stewart, Medical Officer of Health for the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit. "This is an important milestone in protecting a vulnerable population in our community."

We know many people are eagerly anticipating their turn to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. The Health Unit's local COVID-19 Vaccination distribution plan aligns with the [provincial COVID-19 vaccination program](#). Planning for began last spring when we reviewed and updated our community immunization plan. Since then we have added to the plan new information about the administration and storage of the approved COVID-19 vaccines, the priority groups set by the province, options for providing the vaccine to individuals and groups with our partners, and what vaccines might come to us and when. Our experienced staff has contributed to all aspects of this plan, and we are actively working with our health care partners on its implementation. The availability of the vaccine is the key factor influencing the roll out of the plan. Details will be posted on our website as they are available.

Until the majority of individuals in our population have been immunized, we all must continue to do everything we can to protect one another from the spread of illness by being COVID-19 SMART. The continued efforts of individuals and families will help keep the number of positive cases low in our area and help our community stay safe until vaccines are available to all. The people who are immunized must

also follow all these precautions as we don't know yet if the vaccine prevents the virus from being transmitted, in addition to preventing symptoms.

Public messages will be shared on our website and social media, as well as through local media channels when we know more about the next steps. The Health Unit regularly sends information directly to health care providers and they will also be updated through this approach. If a physician is not on our list, they can [contact](#) us to receive these updates. For more detailed information and FAQs about the vaccine visit the [COVID-19 Protection and Vaccine](#) section of our website.