

Date: January 27, 2021

Memorandum To: Hospital CEOs
Medical Officers of Health

From: Dr. David Williams
Chief Medical Officer of Health Ontario

Subject: **Pfizer Dosing Interval Extension**

As you are aware, the Ministry received confirmation from the federal government last week that Ontario will not be receiving any Pfizer-BioNTech allocations for the week of January 25th and only 26,325 doses in the week of February 1st. No further information has been provided for weeks of February 8th or 15th.

We recognize that this allocation reduction will have significant impact on the current level of vaccine delivery across the province and will be challenging for your organizations and your communities. However, this does not stop the vaccination program rollout and it does not change Ontario's commitment to vaccinating and protecting our residents in long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care homes.

In response to the allocation reductions and to ensure that we can continue the critical vaccinations in homes and provide the second dose for everyone who has received a first dose, the Ministry of Health has provided direction to extend the dosing interval for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

To enable the implementation of the extended dosing interval, I am providing public health guidance as contemplated in the *Supporting Ontario's Recovery Act, 2020* (SORA) to clarify that all sites should schedule, or reschedule as required, all second dose appointments for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to follow 35 days after the administration of the first dose, and no later than 42 days, for all vaccine recipients other than residents of long-term care, high-risk retirement and First Nations elder care homes. The dosing interval for residents should be maintained at 21-27 days.

Subsection 2(1) of SORA provides as follows:

2 (1) No cause of action arises against any person as a direct or indirect result of an individual being or potentially being infected with or exposed to coronavirus (COVID-19) on or after March 17, 2020 as a direct or indirect result of an act or omission of the person if,

- (a) at the relevant time, the person acted or made a good faith effort to act in accordance with,
 - (i) public health guidance relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) that applied to the person, and
 - (ii) any federal, provincial or municipal law relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) that applied to the person; and
- (b) the act or omission of the person does not constitute gross negligence.

This guidance on dosing interval is aligned with the [updated National Advisory Committee on Immunization's recommendations](#) on the use of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines. It is also consistent with the recommendations from the [World Health Organization](#) and the [Centre for Disease Control](#).

The extended dosage interval is a direct response to the temporarily reduced vaccine availability from the federal government and uncertainty regarding the stability of supply in the near-term, as well as the current provincial epidemiology of the pandemic. We will provide additional or updated guidance as required when further details regarding vaccine allocations and supply become available.

We are grateful for all the work that you and your teams are doing to deliver the vaccines to the people of Ontario and sincerely thank you for your continued leadership, expertise and commitment to implement Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine delivery plan.

Sincerely,

(original signed by)

Dr. David Williams

c:

General Rick Hillier (ret'd), Chair, Vaccine Distribution Task Forces

Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health

Mario Di Tommaso, Deputy Solicitor General, Ministry of the Solicitor General

Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery, Ministry of Health