

**COVID-19**



# **Overview**

# **Peel's Community**

# **Mass Vaccination**

# **Plan (MVP)**

Current as of March 10, 2021

# Introduction

The Ontario Public Health Standards (Ontario Ministry of Health) mandates public health units to lead local vaccination programs. In the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this mandate has now been directed to implementing community-wide vaccination to interrupt transmission and reduce the burden of COVID-19. Achieving this mandate with the COVID-19 virus requires partnership across the health system (e.g. hospitals, primary care, pharmacies, paramedics, Ontario Health) and community sector (e.g. municipalities, social services, priority population groups). For Peel's mass vaccination plan, the Region of Peel is also a major partner providing significant supports and resources.

As one of the hardest hit communities in Ontario and Canada, it is critical to develop a local, targeted vaccination plan that considers the unique features of Peel. Peel's Community Mass Vaccination Plan ('the Plan') will ensure that the Region of Peel and its partners are working together to vaccinate residents and increase their confidence in vaccination against COVID-19.

To help understand the Plan for Peel region, this report summarizes:

- The Plan's goals, objectives, and targets
- Governance, partnerships and community engagement
- Priority populations
- Vaccination sites
- Vaccine storage and distribution
- Communication strategy built on Peel's diverse population needs and characteristics
- Documentation and reporting

The vision is to vaccinate as many of Peel's population as quickly and safely as possible, however there will be times when the Plan will need to adapt, for instance, if vaccine supply changes. The Plan was developed with this flexibility in mind, to allow for continuous adjustments and the ability to scale up administration as more vaccines become available. At the same time, Peel Public Health will continue its commitment to responding to COVID-19 transmission in the community.

## Plan's approach

Peel region has been severely impacted by COVID-19, requiring prompt vaccination against the virus. The hope is to achieve a level of vaccine coverage that will slow virus transmission and reduce rates of illness, hospitalization, and death. The Plan's **goal** is to vaccinate at least 75% of Peel's population against COVID-19 as quickly and safely as possible, with the most vulnerable populations given priority. Currently, vaccines have been approved for those 16 years of age and older. Availability of additional vaccines and/or potential approval for use in younger age groups will increase the likelihood for achieving a 75% coverage rate.

Reaching a large population over a short time period requires many engaged partners and significant resources. To achieve this, the Plan's **objectives** are to:

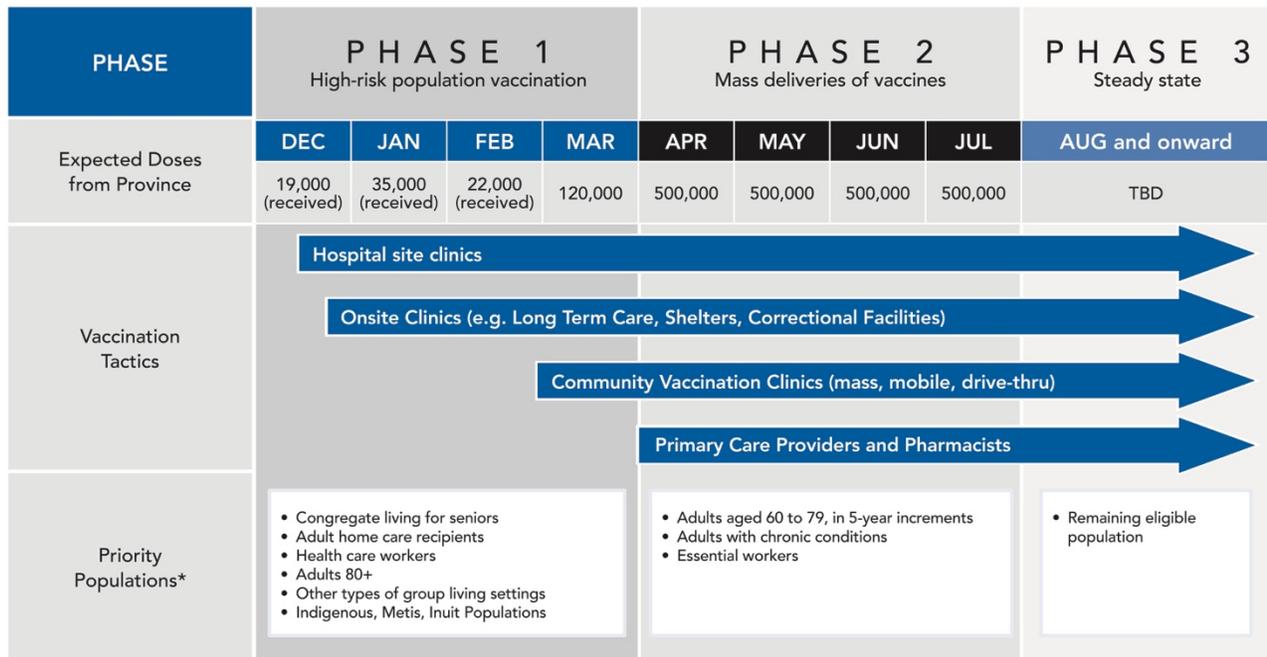
- Collaborate within the health system for an integrated, aligned approach to vaccination in Peel
- Increase residents' awareness of the vaccine's importance and safety
- Increase vaccine uptake and reduce vaccine hesitancy through engaging community partners
- Distribute and administer vaccines efficiently upon receipt
- Maintain vaccine wastage rates below 5%

Adherence to these objectives will help guide system plans, permit the setting of milestones and metrics, and confirm operations preparedness and rapid response to local vaccine distribution and administration.

Based on forecasts, at least 2.3 million doses will be required to vaccinate at least 75% of the population. Clinics will have the capacity to vaccinate more than this if the uptake is greater. The Region of Peel will continue advocating to the Province for higher vaccine allocations given the provincial commitment to prioritize regions with the highest rates of COVID-19 infection.

**Figure 1** conceptually summarizes Peel's plan for vaccination. It maps out how many doses are expected to be received, potential sites for vaccination, and when some populations may start getting the vaccine. This approach will continuously evolve and depend on vaccine supply, demand, and capacity to administer vaccine across the Region. Phase periods are estimates and may change (i.e. shift to start sooner or later). A priority population group may also undergo further sequencing to smaller sub-groups during times of limited supply.

**Figure 1: Peel Region’s phased vaccination approach**

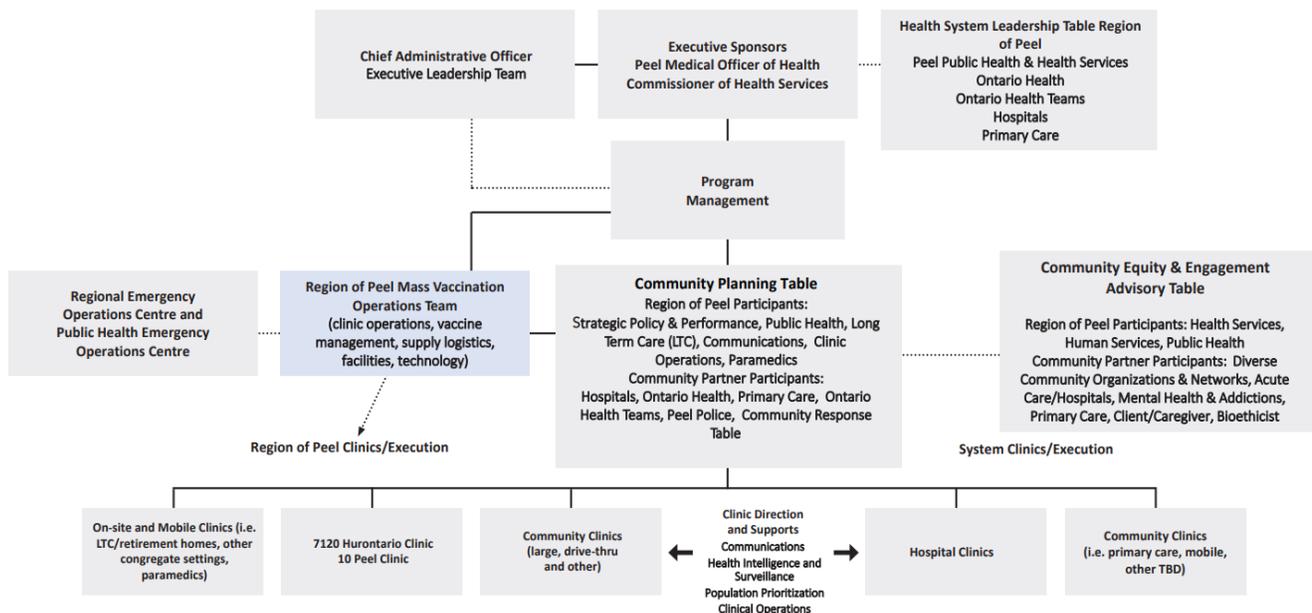


\*This is not an exhaustive list of priority populations, additional information will be made available at [peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/](https://peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/)

## Governance, partnerships and community engagement

A successful community-wide vaccination plan requires collaboration not only across the health sector, but also with the local government and community leaders. This ensures that vaccination is a shared responsibility across sectors and is responsive to community needs. **Figure 2** summarizes the various groups and partners that are involved in creating and executing the Plan.

**Figure 2: Governance structure**



The executive leaders on the **Health System Leadership Table** are responsible for strategic direction and shared responsibility for Peel’s vaccination plan.

**A Community Planning Table** is responsible for ensuring the Plan is responsive to community needs, especially in reaching and engaging priority populations and disadvantaged communities, and in coordinating implementation of the plan across the system. Members represent a broad cross-section of the health and community sectors. Peel’s **COVID-19 Community Response Table**, which includes over 90 local community partners, agencies, and the not-for-profit sector is also on this Table. Engagement with additional local agencies, sectors, cultural and faith groups, and other key community partners will be through the development of Population Planning Tables.

**Population Planning Tables** will focus on defining and understanding the unique needs and concerns of individual population groupings, identifying barriers and providing supports to encourage vaccine uptake. Initial focus will be on those populations prioritized for vaccination – senior’s congregate settings, home care and assisted living services, seniors and older adults, indigenous communities, health care workers, institutional settings, shelters and homelessness supports and community, and social services supports.

**The Community Equity and Engagement Advisory Table** was established to provide advice, direction and guidance on applying provincial ethical frameworks and equity considerations to Peel’s population Planning Tables. This group will determine approaches to engagement and the types of clinics most appropriate for maximizing vaccine uptake throughout our diverse population, including the most vulnerable.

A Region of Peel **Mass Vaccination Operations Team** pulls on various departments and structures to work together and support specific components of the Plan. This includes vaccine distribution, facilities, IT, communications, clinic operations, health surveillance, human resources, etc. From an efficiency perspective, health system partners may also utilize Region of Peel supports (e.g. communication tools) for their vaccination approach.

Since the pandemic response will be ongoing during community vaccination, there will be a need for the governance structure to be linked and engaged with internal emergency operations centres.

## Local prioritization of populations

While the Federal government and the Province provide broad direction on vaccine administration and priority populations, the Region of Peel is using a locally developed framework to guide its COVID-19 vaccine prioritization. Decision-making factors include:

1. Consider those with higher disease risk
2. Consider groups where infection could have disproportionate consequences of infection
3. Addressing barriers for equity deserving groups
4. Maintenance of essential services for the functioning of society
5. Adequate vaccine availability and specifications
6. Within a facility or setting, vaccinate as many priority groups as reasonable

Priority population groups identified at this time for **Phase 1** vaccination in Peel include:

- Long-term care homes (workers<sup>1</sup> and residents)
- Retirement homes (workers and residents)
- Home care agencies and personal support workers of seniors or persons with disabilities (workers and residents)

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<sup>1</sup>The Ministry of Health defines a “health care worker” for the purposes of COVID immunization prioritization as:

- any regulated health professionals and any staff member, contract worker, student/trainee, registered volunteer, or other essential caregiver currently working in a health care organization, including workers in non-direct patient care roles such as cleaning staff, food services staff, information technology staff, security, research staff, and other administrative staff
- professionals providing a health care service or direct patient service in a congregate or community setting outside of health care organization (e.g.) nurse in a school, physiotherapist in an assisted living facility, medical first responder in the community, peer worker in a shelter

- High risk health care workers in hospitals and acute care settings that support and administer COVID-19 vaccines, test for COVID-19, or provide care to COVID-19 patients.
- Hospital inpatients destined for long-term care beds and complex continuing care
- Other senior housing (workers and residents)
- Community care settings serving seniors and persons with disabilities
- Indigenous communities
- General population 80-years-old and over

Other groups will be added as more data becomes available and considerations are made. Roll-out to priority groups is ultimately subject to provincial direction. Updates, sequencing and order will be shared through the Region of Peel's website, and broad communications will ensure that all priority groups and eventually all residents know when it is their turn for the vaccine.

## Community vaccination sites

It is important to note that all planning is contingent on vaccine availability. All clinics will maintain COVID-19 health and safety measures, including physical distancing and mandatory masking at all times.

### Initial clinics

The Provincial government directed initial priority population groups for first receipt of the vaccine when it arrived in December. The first target population group were those most at risk of exposure and/or mortality – residents of long term care homes and high-risk retirement homes, and those that care for them. In mid-December, Trillium Health Partners (Mississauga Hospital) and William Osler Health Centre (Brampton Civic) began vaccinating their high-risk staff along with health care workers from long term care and retirement homes.

Long term care and retirement homes began vaccinating residents, essential caregivers and some staff onsite in late December. The goal was to have all sites, with both doses administered, completed by end of February 2021.

## Expanding types of clinics

Together with health system and community partners, preparations are underway for further roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines in Peel. One method of delivery will be through community vaccination clinics. The Region of Peel has been working with partners including the local municipalities of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga to open clinics across the region. Clinic locations are being assessed based on several factors:

- Venue space for maximizing vaccine administration while still able to accommodate for health and safety measures, including physical distancing requirements
- Freezers, fridges and standby power to support vaccine storage requirements
- Location within or close to neighbourhoods with high COVID-19 incidence rates
- Public transit availability
- Parking lot size (large enough to avoid local street parking)
- Existing security arrangements, including ability for 24-hour security onsite
- Meets WIFI connectivity needs
- Construction activities planned within the facility during 2021

Throughout February to April, several community clinics will be ready to open. The clinics will be open at first to **priority groups and not the general public**. Eventually, these clinics, along with other locations and options (hospital, primary care, Ontario Health Teams, community pharmacies) will be open by appointment for the general population. Drive-thru and mobile clinics are also being explored, including who best to receive vaccine through these routes. Most community clinics will have the ability to quickly increase staffing and hours if Peel region receives more doses than originally estimated.

**Table 1** summarizes clinic locations, readiness dates and estimated capacity to deliver doses, based on information available as of March 10, 2021. Over time, vaccination sites will work towards planned dose capacity levels as vaccine availability and uptake increases.

The population groups that the various clinics will serve will be released just before clinic opening dates, including the process for booking appointments. Options will be available for booking appointments, including online and through a phone system. Broad communications on clinic openings will be shared through several common outlets, including the Region of Peel's website.

**Table 1: Peel Region Mass Vaccination Sites**

<b>Fixed Community Clinics:</b>	<b>Clinic Ready Date</b>	<b>Planned Daily Dose Capacity</b>
Trillium Health Partners (THP) Mississauga	December 22	1000
William Osler Health System (WOHS) Brampton	December 22	930
WOHS Chinguacousy Wellness Centre, Brampton	January 13	800
Region of Peel – Public Health 7120 Hurontario St., Mississauga	February 11	975
Region of Peel – Municipal Office 10 Peel Centre Drive, Brampton	February 16	585
Save Max Sports Centre (formerly Brampton Soccer Centre), Brampton	March 1	7800
THP – University of Toronto Recreation, Athletics and Wellness Centre, Mississauga	March 1	4000
Paramount Fine Foods Centre Sportsplex	March 3	7800
Caledon East Community Complex Caledon	March 6	780
International Centre, Mississauga	March 10	3900
Chris Gibson Area, Brampton	April 6	2925
<b>Mobile Clinics</b>	Underway	880
<b>Drive-Thru</b>	Spring 2021	310
<b>Primary Care</b>	Not yet available	4000
<b>Pharmacy</b>	Not yet available	2500
<b>Converted Testing Centres</b>	Not yet available	1710
<b>Notes:</b> All sites planned for operating 7 days a week, except for Caledon East CC, which is being used on Fridays for COVID-19 testing		

Meetings are currently being held with several community leaders to help identify and reduce challenges for select populations in getting the vaccine. For instance, some groups may benefit from a mobile clinic due to accessibility limitations or to help increase vaccine uptake.

## Staffing vaccine clinics

Clinics will be staffed using a mix of existing public health employees, new hires and volunteers. Clinic roles will include clinical leaders, vaccinators, administration (schedulers and reception), trainers, security personnel, custodians, greeters, crowd flow monitors, parking attendants, and onsite technological support.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 response that is anticipated to continue through 2021, the number of public health staff that can be reassigned to support the clinics is limited. Recruitment through other channels is occurring over February and March so that sufficient staffing resources are available upon launching various clinics; with the ability to adjust staffing levels as needed. New recruits will be sourced from:

- Employee reassignment
- External job postings
- Volunteer services
- Students
- Community health care providers working in addition to their regular practice
- Temporary help agencies

An intensive orientation and training program will be provided to everyone working in the clinics. Training on health and safety protocols and on how to properly wear personal protective equipment (PPE) will also be a part of this program.

## Vaccine storage and distribution

Processes are in place for secure, robust, efficient, and safe storage and transport of the COVID-19 vaccine, while producing minimal waste across all vaccinating sites in Peel region. Currently, there are several key partners involved in vaccine distribution:

- **The Government of Canada** approves and secures vaccines for use in Canada and provides dose allocations to Provinces/Territories
- **Province of Ontario** receives vaccine from federal government, distributes vaccine to public health units and local hospitals, and responsible for vaccine tracking and health care records management
- **Public Health Units** stores and distributes vaccines, as mandated in the Ontario Public Health Standards Vaccine Storage and Handling Protocol (2018)

Peel Public Health will monitor and track Peel's vaccine inventory on a daily basis, from receiving the vaccines for storage to transporting vaccines to clinics and primary care providers. The goal will be to move the vaccine as quickly as possible from receipt to distribution.

# Communications

To ensure a successful rollout, the objective of the Plan's communication strategy is to build awareness and overcome vaccine hesitancy amongst those who live and work in Peel region. Communications will be coordinated with health system partners, working within the following guiding principles:

- Ensuring timely, credible and transparent communications
- Ensuring accessibility and literacy levels
- Reaching all diverse audiences, using various languages and formats
- Eliminating barriers to maximize reach and uptake
- Using existing communication materials, channels and community leaders
- Understanding community needs, concerns and beliefs to inform approach

The Region of Peel's communication strategy will be community-centric, delivering information as quickly as possible. New and existing partnerships are not only providing insight into this, but are also involved in amplifying and extending the Region's messages on vaccination to various ethnic groups, racialized groups, hard to reach populations, and populations disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Community engagement and outreach will occur through several avenues: the Plan's population planning tables, Peel's COVID-19 Community Response Table members, community-led COVID-19 task forces (e.g. South Asian, Muslim, Hispanic), religious leaders, workplaces, municipalities, hospitals, health care providers, Ontario Health, Canadian Mental Health Association, senior's groups, schools, businesses, and media.

Communication tactics will be frequent and ongoing over the next year, focussing on three main areas:

Communication Areas	Sampling of Topics	Sampling of Regular Tactics
Vaccine information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the vaccine?</li> <li>• Vaccine benefits, safety and myth busting</li> <li>• Priority populations</li> <li>• Where to follow-up with questions</li> <li>• Vaccination reporting</li> <li>• Continuation of public health measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/</li> <li>• Region of Peel social media</li> <li>• Region of Peel customer contact centre</li> <li>• Connect2Peel email (over 130,000 subscribers)</li> </ul>
Clinic information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vaccine sites: who, when, where and how</li> <li>• Types of clinics</li> <li>• Booking appointments</li> <li>• Locations and accessibility</li> <li>• Health and safety of clinics and clients</li> <li>• Consent forms and instructions</li> <li>• Reporting side effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted ad campaigns</li> <li>• Print media and digital marketing</li> <li>• Billboards</li> <li>• Virtual town halls and webinars</li> <li>• Videos for digital screens</li> <li>• Regional Council updates</li> </ul>
Community champions as a trusted source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking active roles for communicating above topics</li> <li>• Addressing barriers to getting the vaccine and embedding community knowledge into communications approach</li> <li>• Experiences from local heroes to maintain momentum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posters in the community</li> <li>• Recorded messaging for phone systems</li> <li>• Toolkits and key messages for partners and community champions</li> </ul> <p>IB: communications will be in various languages</p>

# Documentation and reporting

The Region of Peel is implementing a process to support regular data collection, progress monitoring, and sharing, including:

- Vaccine doses received from the Province and administered, based on monthly targets
- Per cent of population received vaccine (i.e., 1st dose, 2nd dose), including priority populations
- Vaccine distribution and wastage across health systems
- Vaccine safety (i.e., Adverse Events Following Immunization [AEFIs])

The Region of Peel has updated its online COVID-19 dashboard to include vaccine status. Currently it reflects total doses administered, with the option to view by select clinic type. The dashboard will include more detailed metrics at the regional level and with all vaccines once the Province enables this feature from their data monitoring systems.

The province has developed and rolled out an online platform solution called COVax Ontario. This software is designed for use at point-of-care to support vaccine management, administration, clinic operations and reporting to the Ministry of Health. The system is meant for use in most clinic settings, including those led by public health, hospitals and other vaccine providers.

## Vaccine safety

An AEFI is an unwanted or unexpected health effect that happens after someone receives a vaccine, which may or may not be caused by the vaccine. These can occur in the minutes following vaccination or in the days and weeks to follow. All health care practitioners and vaccinators are required to report AEFIs to local public health units. AEFIs that meet the Ministry of Health case definitions and criteria will then be investigated and reported to the Ministry by Peel Public Health.

## Evaluation

Ongoing monitoring, feedback and real-time process improvements will occur throughout implementation of the Plan. This will include experiences from clients, employees, volunteers and partner agencies. Examples of data to be collected are:

- How long clients are waiting in line; from registration to getting the vaccine, and then leaving the clinic
- How many vaccinations can be completed per vaccinator per hour
- How many clients are processed through the clinic each day
- Client feedback on their experience with the process and opportunities for improvement
- Per cent of clients with adverse reactions to the vaccine
- Per cent of no-show clients

Evaluation reporting and program adaptations will be completed and shared in a timely fashion with partners and the Province.

## Moving forward

The COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation that requires constant adjustment. This will also apply to community vaccination, which is dependent on vaccine supply and demand. Successful planning and implementation of the Plan can only be achieved in partnership with the health systems and community sector. This plan will be continuously evaluated and further refined with system and community partners to ensure it is meeting local needs and supporting increased vaccine uptake.

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**For more information visit [peelregion.ca](https://www.peelregion.ca)**

