



February 5, 2021

## VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Dear Community Members,

### RE: COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Chippewa Health Centre is very happy to announce our vaccination plans are coming together more quickly than we anticipated. We are expecting to host a COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic for Chippewas of the Thames On-Reserve Membership ONLY, in the very near future. The Health Unit will host COVID-19 vaccination clinics in Middlesex London at later date for Off-Reserve Indigenous People.

Please find enclosed the following information:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Screening and Consent Information Session Flyer.
- We're in this fight together Let's stop COVID-19.
- Together, let's stop COVID-19 one arm at a time.
- COVID-19 VACCINE SCREENING AND CONSENT FORM.
- COVID-19 Update Questions and Answers.
- ISC COVID Vaccine – Frequently asked Questions.
- CBC London How London's vaccine plan includes Indigenous clients.

The consent form is to be completed by each individual in your household age 16 and over. Once the consent form is completed please return to the health centre by Friday February 19, 2021 by 2pm to be eligible for the grand prize.

**Please note if you have any allergies consult your physician to go over this form with him/her.**

We need the consent forms completed ahead of time and returned to us so we can order the vaccines and complete all the data processing information prior to setting up your appointment. No walk-in will be accepted on the days of the clinics due to vaccine criteria.

Please note we will be having a grand prize draw of \$1,000.00 dollars drawn on April 15, 2021 for On-Reserve Members ONLY.

The On-Reserve criteria is:

- Chippewa Band Member residing On-Reserve ONLY.
- Must have completed the consent form and submit to Chippewa Health Centre by Friday February 19, 2021 by 2pm.
- Must have proof both doses of COVID-19 Vaccine.

Please note we will have a grand prize draw of \$1,000.00 dollars drawn on June 21, 2021 for Off-Reserve Members ONLY.

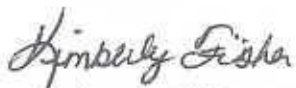
The Off-Reserve criteria is:

- Chippewas of the Thames First Nation Band Member residing Off-Reserve ONLY.
- Must have proof both doses of COVID-19 Vaccine.

More information about your individual appointments will be forth coming upon completion of the consent forms and prior to the actual clinics. The vaccination clinics will be held at the Antler River School and we will announce those dates very soon.

Any questions or concerns regarding the consent forms or vaccine information please contact the Community Health Nurse at 519 289-5641 ext. 226.

Miigwetch,



Kimberly Fisher, CFNHM  
Health Director



# COVID-19 VACCINE SCREENING & CONSENT INFO SESSION

**Preparing for the COVID-19 Vaccination for CMO on reserve Community Members.**

**Who:** Anyone 16 years and older

**Where:** Oneida Community Centre- Bears Den

**When:** Monday February 8<sup>th</sup> – Friday February 12<sup>th</sup>

**Times:** Monday- Friday 10am-3pm, Tues & Thurs 5pm-8pm

**Note:** Chippewa Nurse will be present

## QUESTIONS-CONCERNS- WANT MORE INFO

Come out to ask questions and fill out your consent form to prepare you and your family for the COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic.  
(Date to be determined)

Screening for Covid-19 upon entry. Please refrain from attending info session if you are unwell or are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

## **MASKS ARE MANDATORY**

Please be advised that there is a plan in place for off reserve members to be vaccinated in London at a later date.

# We're in this fight together

## Let's stop COVID-19

Get vaccinated to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community.

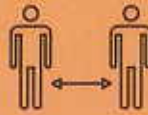
Remember to continue to:



Wash your hands



Stay home when sick



Maintain physical distance



Wear a face mask



Keep using good cough and surface hygiene

Talk to a health care provider in your community, if you have questions about the vaccine.

#crushCOVID



Catalogue: R5-766/2021E-PDF  
ISBN: 978-0-660-37259-4



Government of Canada  
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Canada

# Together, let's stop COVID-19 one arm at a time

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and approved by Health Canada.

Improved technology, worldwide collaboration, and increased government funding helped speed up the development of the vaccines.

The vaccine works to:



Recognize the virus



Destroy the infected cells



Produce antibodies to fight the virus



Remember the virus and how to fight it, if you are exposed to it again

Talk to a health care provider in your community, if you have questions about the vaccine.

#crushCOVID



Catalogue: R5-764/2021E-PDF  
ISBN: 978-0-660-37257-0



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Canada

# COVID-19 Vaccine Screening and Consent Form

## SCREENING AND CONSENT FORM –COVID-19 Vaccine

Version 2.0 – January 23, 2021

Last Name		First Name		Identification (e.g., health card number)	
Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Binary <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer				Primary Care Clinician (Family Physician or Nurse Practitioner)	
Home Phone		Mobile Phone	Email Address		
Street Address			City	Province	Postal Code
Date of Birth (month, day, year) ____ / ____ / ____	Age	Is this your <b>first or second dose</b> of the vaccine? <input type="checkbox"/> First <input type="checkbox"/> Second			
		If second, please indicate the date of the first dose: ____ / ____ / ____ (month, day, year)			

**Please answer all questions below:**

<p><b>Do you have symptoms of COVID-19 or feel ill today*?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	If yes, please provide details
<p><b>Have you previously had a severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) to a previous dose of a COVID mRNA vaccine or to any of its components or its container?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	If yes, please provide details
<p><b>Do you have a suspected hypersensitivity or have you had an immediate allergic reaction (this would include an allergic reaction that occurred within 4 hours that cause hives, swelling, or respiratory distress, including wheezing) to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A previous dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> <li>• <b>Any components of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (including polyethylene glycol (PEG)**</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> <li>• <b>Polysorbate (due to potential cross-reactive hypersensitivity with the vaccine ingredient PEG)**</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</li> </ul>	If yes, please provide details

<p><b>Have you ever had a severe (e.g. anaphylaxis) or an immediate allergic reaction to any other vaccine or injectable therapy (e.g. intramuscular, intravenous, or subcutaneous vaccines or therapies not related to a component of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines or polysorbates)?</b> <i>(this would include an allergic reaction that occurred within 4 hours that cause hives, swelling, or respiratory distress, including wheezing)</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>If yes, please provide details</p>
<p><b>Have you ever had a severe allergic reaction (e.g., anaphylaxis) not related to vaccines or injectable medications – such as allergies to food, pet, venom, environmental, or latex etc.?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>If yes, please provide details</p>
<p><b>Have you received another vaccine (not a COVID-19 vaccine) in the past 14 days?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>If yes, please provide details</p>
<p><b>Are you or could you be pregnant?</b>    <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>If yes, please provide details</p>
<p><b>Are you breastfeeding?</b>    <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>If yes, please provide details</p>
<p><b>Do you have any problems with your immune system or are you taking any medications that can affect your immune system</b> (e.g., high dose steroids, chemotherapy)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>If yes, please provide details</p>
<p><b>Do you have an autoimmune disease?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p>If yes, please provide details</p>
<p><b>Do you have a bleeding disorder or are taking medications that could affect blood clotting</b> (e.g., blood thinners)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	

**Have you ever felt faint or fainted after a past vaccination or medical procedure?**

If yes, please provide details

No  Yes

\* Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, new onset of cough or worsening of chronic cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, difficulty swallowing, decrease or loss of smell or taste, chills, headaches, unexplained tiredness / malaise / muscle aches, nausea / vomiting, diarrhea or abdominal pain, pink eye, or runny nose or nasal congestion without other known cause or, for those over 70 years of age, an unexplained or increased number of falls, acute functional decline, worsening of chronic conditions or delirium

\*\* Polyethylene glycol (PEG) can rarely cause allergic reactions and is found in products such as medications, bowel preparation products for colonoscopy, laxatives, cough syrups, cosmetics, skin creams, medical products used on the skin and during operations, toothpaste, contact lenses and contact lens solution. PEG also can be found in foods or drinks, but is not known to cause allergic reactions from foods or drinks. Polysorbate may also cause allergic reactions because of cross-reactivity with PEG.

**Consent to Receive the Vaccine**

I have read (or it has been read to me) and I understand the 'COVID-19 Vaccine Information Sheet'

- I have had the opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered to my satisfaction.
- I have had the opportunity to speak with my primary care provider regarding any special considerations that apply to me in respect of the COVID-19 vaccine.

I consent to receiving the vaccine

**Acknowledgement of Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Health Information**

The personal health information on this form is being collected for the purpose of providing care to you and creating an immunization record for you, and because it is necessary for the administration of Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination program. This information will be used and disclosed for these purposes, as well as other purposes authorized and required by law. For example,

- it will be disclosed to the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Ontario public health units where the disclosure is necessary for a purpose of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. And
- it may be disclosed, as part of your provincial electronic health record, to health care providers who are providing care to you.

The information will be stored in a health record system under the custody and control of the Ministry of Health.



Where a Clinic Site is administered by a hospital, the hospital will collect, use and disclose your information as an agent of the Ministry of Health.

**I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above statement.**

You may be contacted by a hospital, local public health unit, or the Ministry of Health for purposes related to the COVID-19 vaccine (for example, to remind you of follow up appointments and to provide you with proof of vaccination). If you consent to receiving these follow up communications by email or text/SMS, please indicate this using the boxes below.

**I consent to receiving follow-up communications:**

**by email**    **by text/SMS**

**Consent to Being Contacted About Research Studies**

Many research studies will be conducted in respect of COVID-19 vaccines.

You have the option of consenting to be contacted by researchers about participation in COVID-19 vaccine related research studies. If you consent to be contacted, your personal health information will be used to determine which studies may be relevant to you, and your name and contact information will be disclosed to researchers. Consenting to be contacted about research studies does not mean you have consented to participate in the research itself. Participating in research is voluntary. You may refuse to consent to be contacted about research studies without impacting your eligibility to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

If you consent to be contacted about research studies, and then change your mind, you may withdraw your consent at any time by contacting the Ministry of Health at [Vaccine@ontario.ca](mailto:Vaccine@ontario.ca).

**I consent to be contacted about COVID-19 vaccine related research studies:**

**by email**    **by text/SMS**    **by phone**    **by mail**

**I do not consent to be contacted about COVID-19 related research studies:**

Signature	Print Name	Date of Signature
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If signing for someone other than yourself, indicate your relationship to that other person:

If signing for someone other than myself, I confirm that I am the parent / legal guardian or substitute decision maker.

Specific Issues re: Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007

The resident's consent to receive the vaccine may be withdrawn or revoked at any time.

Statement respecting section 83 of the Act:

Please note the following legal protection:

Every licensee of a long-term care home shall ensure that no person is told or led to believe that a prospective resident will be refused admission or that a resident will be discharged from the home because,

- (a) a document has not been signed;
- (b) an agreement has been voided; or
- (c) a consent or directive with respect to treatment or care has been given, not given, withdrawn or revoked.

FOR CLINIC USE ONLY				
Agent	COVID-19	Product Name	Lot #	Dose
Anatomical Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Left deltoid <input type="checkbox"/> Right deltoid		Route	Intramuscular Dose #
Date Given	____/____/____ (m/d/yyyy)		Time Given	____:____ am pm
Given By (Name, Designation)			Location	AEFI? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Reason for Immunization			<input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare worker <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare worker: LTC Home <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare worker: Retirement Home <input type="checkbox"/> LTC Home: Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Home: Resident <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced age: community dwelling <input type="checkbox"/> Other employees in acute care, LTC, RHs <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous community <input type="checkbox"/> Chronic conditions	
Reason Immunizations Not Given			Healthcare provider: <input type="checkbox"/> Determines immunization is contraindicated <input type="checkbox"/> Recommends immunization but no consent received <input type="checkbox"/> Determines that immunization will be temporarily deferred	
Your dose 2 of 2 is scheduled for:		____/____/____ (m/d/yyyy)      ____:____ am      pm		

# COVID-19 Update

For more information:  
[Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus)

Information for Indigenous communities:  
[Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous)



## INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA – Ontario Region Vaccine Questions and Answers

January 2021

*Indigenous Services Canada is committed to sharing information on the science of vaccinations with you, your family and your community to help inform your choice to receive the vaccine when it's available.*

*It's important to ask questions so you can see the facts about COVID-19 vaccines for yourself and make the best decision for you, your family and your community.*

*Some information may vary, therefore please speak to your local health care provider.*

### **Q: Are the COVID-19 vaccines safe?**

The COVID-19 vaccines are safe. Canada is recognized around the world for its high standards for drug and vaccine review, approvals and monitoring systems; these have not been compromised. Vaccines are tested and authorized with specifications on the age, health status, and other factors of those eligible to receive it.

### **Q. How was the vaccine developed so quickly?**

The term coronavirus refers to a whole family of viruses of which COVID-19 is a part of, officially known as SARS-CoV-2. SARS-CoV (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus) and MERS-CoV (Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus) emerged in 2002 and 2012 respectively. Scientists began the process of developing a vaccine for SARS-CoV in 2002.

Scientists have been able to develop COVID-19 vaccines quickly thanks to high levels of government funding, by sharing information and working together across countries, and building on technology they already use in existing, successful vaccines.

### **Q. How will the COVID-19 vaccines work?**

Vaccines work by training your immune system to recognize a virus and stop it from making you sick. After you get the vaccine, your body is ready to respond quickly if you are exposed to the virus, more quickly than if you hadn't had the vaccine. The vaccines that have been approved are very effective at preventing people from catching COVID-19 and getting sick.



**Q: Do I have to pay for the vaccine?**

The vaccine is free. As more vaccines are made and distributed, the Government of Canada expects to be able to offer vaccination to everyone who wants one.

**Q: Will getting the vaccine be mandatory?**

Vaccination is a personal choice, and like other vaccines in Canada, the COVID-19 vaccine is not mandatory. By getting the COVID-19 vaccine, you will be protected against the novel coronavirus, and you will help prevent the spread of the virus to your family and those in your community who may be more likely to contract it. This includes Elders and older adults; and people with certain medical conditions where infection could cause severe illness and death.

The COVID-19 vaccine will also be an important step to safely resume normal life.

**Q. What vaccines have been approved for use in Canada?**

After independent and thorough scientific reviews for safety, efficacy and quality, Health Canada has approved two vaccines for use in Canada:

- Pfizer-BioNTech – approved on December 9, 2020
- Moderna – approved on December 23, 2020

**Q. Why are First Nations a priority this time? Are First Nations being used for vaccine testing?**

Indigenous people are more likely than other Canadians to have health problems and are more at risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19. Canada's National Committee on Immunization has recommended they be a priority for this reason. The vaccines are not being tested on Indigenous people. Large studies have already been done with the vaccines that are approved in Canada, in tens of thousands of people.

**Q. Who is eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is approved for use on people 16 years and older. The Moderna vaccine is approved for use on people 18 years and older.

**Q. When will the vaccine be available for children?**

The vaccine has not yet been approved for children. Research is underway to determine when children can receive the vaccine.

**Q: What are the potential side effects of the vaccine?**

Most people have no side effects at all. However, like any medication, vaccines can cause side effects and reactions, such as:

- pain, redness or swelling where the needle was given
- mild fever
- tiredness
- muscle or joint aches/pain

These mild side effects go away on their own without treatment.

Over a million people worldwide have now had vaccines and there have been very few serious side effects.

**Q. Can someone experience a severe allergic reaction to the vaccine?**

Very rarely people can experience an allergic reaction. In those cases, measures are in place to treat those individuals quickly.

Serious allergic reactions can happen in rare circumstances with all vaccines, so it is important to talk to your nurse or doctor if you have ever had serious allergic reactions.

People with allergies to any of the ingredients in a COVID-19 vaccine should not receive that vaccine.

**Q. What are the ingredients in the vaccines?**

All of the ingredients in the vaccines are known and are part of the Health Canada review process for vaccines. There are no “unapproved products” in the vaccines.

The Moderna vaccine ingredients are available here:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/moderna.html#a11>

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine ingredients are available here:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/drugs-vaccines-treatments/vaccines/pfizer-biontech.html#a1.1>

Vaccines for other infections like meningitis and polio have prevented millions of people from these diseases and have saved lives.

**Q: Can the vaccine give me the coronavirus?**

The vaccines approved by Health Canada do not contain the virus, therefore, they CANNOT give you the coronavirus.

**Q: If someone has had COVID-19, do they still need to get the vaccine?**

It is still recommended that those who have had COVID-19 and recovered get vaccinated to stay protected. There is some evidence to suggest that natural immunity from a COVID-19 illness may not last very long.

**Q: How many doses of the COVID-19 vaccine will I need?**

One dose of the vaccine may not be enough to provide individual protection. You may need to get a second shot to allow your body to develop adequate immunity. Each vaccine may require a different number of doses on a different schedule. Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, both require two doses 3-4 weeks apart. After two doses, the vaccines are expected to be 94-95% effective.

**Q: Why are some First Nations getting the Moderna vaccine and not the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine?**

Both the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines are equally effective and safe. However, the Moderna vaccine has been set aside for remote and isolated Indigenous communities because it is easier to transport on airplanes into the communities.

**Q: When will the vaccine be available to me, my family and my community?**

The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine is an unprecedented effort that will require the collaboration of multiple organizations that provide services to Indigenous communities in Ontario, including Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

As COVID-19 vaccines are approved by Health Canada and are made available, at-risk groups, including some members of Indigenous communities, will be among the first groups to receive the vaccine. This is because there will be a limited supply at the beginning. As vaccine supply increases over 2021, it will become increasingly available to lower-risk groups and individuals as well.

More information concerning the vaccine roll-out in your community will be made available through your First Nation leadership as it becomes available.

**Q: Are First Nations and Indigenous organizations involved in the planning of the vaccine distribution?**

Indigenous organizations, some Indigenous health organizations and Indigenous leaders have been involved in planning for COVID-19 vaccine distribution to Indigenous communities in Ontario.

In fact, Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald is a member of the provincial COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force planning for the vaccine distribution in Ontario.

**Q. What role does Indigenous Services Canada have in the vaccine distribution?**

The Province of Ontario is leading the vaccine distribution; however, ISC Ontario Region also plays a role Nations and is working with partners including community leadership, the Province, public health units, along with Indigenous health authorities and service organizations, to: recruit additional health care providers and support staff, offer training to community health nurses so they are educated about the new vaccines and are certified to do immunizations, assist with community-led vaccination planning, and provide factual and accessible communications that can be used within communities.

**Q: What else can I do to keep myself and my community safe from COVID-19?**

We don't yet know what level of immunity in the population is sufficient to achieve community immunity. Until that time, everyone should continue to follow public health recommendations:

- minimize the number of people you are physically close to
- don't travel unless absolutely necessary
- stay informed about COVID-19 in your community, region, and province
- wash your hands often,
- stay home when sick, and get tested for COVID-19
- maintain physical distancing,
- wear a face mask as appropriate, and
- keep using good cough and surface hygiene.



#### Vaccine product information:

- Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine: 2 doses given 21 days apart to individuals who are 16 years of age and older.
- Moderna vaccine: 2 doses given 28 days apart to individuals who are 18 years of age and older.

#### Before receiving the vaccine, tell your health care provider if:

- You are currently feeling unwell or have signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- You have received any other vaccine (not a COVID-19 vaccine) in the past 14 days
- You could be pregnant or are currently breastfeeding.
- You have fainted after receiving past vaccines or medical procedures
- You have a bleeding disorder or are taking medication that could affect blood clotting
- You have had a previous allergic reaction to any vaccine or any non-medical ingredients of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- You have experienced a serious allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis, to another vaccine, drug or food
- You are immunosuppressed due to disease or treatment or have been diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder.
- You had any side effects after the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine

#### Can you get COVID-19 from the vaccine?

No - vaccines and do not cause the disease they are designed to prevent.

#### What should you do before coming to the clinic?

- Wear a short-sleeve shirt or shirt with sleeves that are easy to roll up.
- Have something to eat before coming to the clinic to prevent feeling faint while being vaccinated.
- Wear your mask.
- Bring any identification required by the clinic, such as your health card.
- Bring your immunization record with you to record this vaccine with other vaccines that you have received.

#### What should you do after receiving the vaccine?

You will be asked to wait at least 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine to be sure you are feeling well. Inform a healthcare provider right away if you feel unwell while waiting. You should not leave the clinic for at least 15 minutes after receiving your vaccine.

#### What are the side effects of the vaccine?

- Pain/ redness and swelling where the needle was given
- Tiredness/headache
- Muscle or joint pain
- Mild fever/chills
- swollen glands

#### Do I need to continue to follow public health measures after I have received the vaccine?

You will need to continue following public health measures to prevent COVID-19, such as wearing a mask, and maintaining a physical distance of 2 metres from people outside of your household

#### Who should I contact with any questions?

If you have any questions, please speak with the person providing the vaccine. Talk with your healthcare provider or where available, call Telehealth Ontario (1- 866-797-0000) about your symptoms and getting a COVID-19 test. Your healthcare provider will advise you when you are able to receive the vaccine



London

## How London's vaccine plan includes Indigenous clients

Unique health needs of the area's Indigenous population won't be overlooked

CBC News · Posted: Jan 31, 2021 6:00 AM ET | Last Updated: January 31



Some space will be set aside at the Western Fair Agriplex vaccination centre for clients who identify as Indigenous. (Andrew Lupton/CBC News)

London's COVID-19 vaccination plan will include partnerships and special services to ensure the unique health needs of the area's Indigenous population aren't overlooked.

The Middlesex London Health Unit (MLHU) vaccination plan released last week calls for 3,000 people to be inoculated every day in the months to come. Hitting that target will require a massive effort to upscale staffing and add three new vaccination sites to the one that opened before Christmas at the Western Fair Agriplex.

- **Indigenous people should be priority for COVID-19 shots even amid shortage: minister**

The 38-page plan released by the health unit includes language that promises steps to develop an urban vaccination strategy for Indigenous people through a partnership with the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Center (SOAHAC), which provides and coordinates health care services for Indigenous people.

Vaccinations will happen at the Agriplex combined with outreach efforts to eventually expand vaccination to congregate settings for Indigenous people and through the use of home visits where necessary.

SOAHAC staff, including at least one nurse, will work in a special space at the Agriplex set aside for clients who identify as Indigenous.

David Remy is SOAHAC's director of client care and said these steps are crucial to making sure the vaccination centres are safe, welcoming spaces for Indigenous people in the face of a deadly pandemic.

"It's care that respects the traditions of Indigenous people," he said. "We're going to have one of our Indigenous nurses that work for SOAHAC, or one of the nurses that have had Indigenous training, work in that space to manage the care for Indigenous people."

Remy said traditional healers will also be available at the Agriplex vaccination centre.

Remy pointed to a 2016 survey his organization conducted, which found that one in four people surveyed felt they'd been treated unfairly while trying to access health care due to their Indigenous identity.

"It's not a great history of relations between Indigenous people and the health care system," he said. Underlying all this is research that points to increased COVID-19 vulnerability for Indigenous people and people of colour.

The federal government has prioritized the vaccination of Indigenous groups, including those in remote communities. The MLHU plan echoes this, with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people included in the first priority phase for COVID-19 vaccinations, along with seniors in long-term care and congregate living, people who work in places where seniors live and health care workers.

Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller said last week he doesn't want the vaccination priority for Indigenous people to fade in the face of political pressure from other groups.

"This is not a political game. It's about science, it's about facts, it's about health care," said Miller. "We have the numbers, the casualties. Indigenous peoples are 3.5 to five times more vulnerable to COVID; we see it with the CDC numbers in the states," Miller said, referencing figures from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control that show some Native American communities have been ravaged by the novel coronavirus.

Miller encouraged provinces not to shift this priority, despite political pressure and a shortage of vaccine that has forced the temporary shutdown of vaccination programs — including London's — due to a shortage of supply.

For now, everyone is waiting for the vaccine supply to return. Remy said SOAHAC is using this time to prepare through hiring and planning.

"We're putting it together, and we're going to be ready when that product comes in," he said.

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824 reading now

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