

**Date:** January 20, 2021

**Memorandum To:** Hospital Chief Executive Officers  
Medical Officers of Health

**From:** General (Retired) Rick Hillier, Chair, COVID-19 Vaccine  
Distribution Task Force

Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health Ontario

Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic  
Response and Recovery

**Subject:** **COVID-19 Vaccine Pfizer Additional Reduction in Allocation**

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On Friday January 15, 2021, Ontario was advised by the federal government of a reduction in the production of the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine due to Pfizer's efforts to expand its European manufacturing facility. This reduction in supply was anticipated to result in a decrease in deliveries by approximately half in the coming weeks.

On January 19, 2021, Ontario was alerted by the National Operations Centre (NOC) that Pfizer announced further reductions in vaccine supply that translate into zero deliveries for the week of January 25, 2021, and subsequent reductions for the first two weeks of deliveries in February. As discussed with you yesterday afternoon, this is a disappointing announcement at a time when teams in hospitals, public health units, long-term care homes and high-risk retirement homes have worked so hard and collaboratively to vaccinate the Phase 1 populations quickly and efficiently and continued to build capacity for when more vaccine is available.

The NOC has advised that it will provide more information about Ontario's allocation on Thursday, January 21, 2021. Until we are provided with more information from the NOC, and learn more about the allocations for the province, we are providing **interim instructions** to mitigate the impact of the reductions. We will provide further details as soon as they are available and will continue to work with you to share information and directions as we adapt to the change in supply.

To mitigate the impact of the latest reductions, we are providing the following interim instructions:

- Pause all first doses (both Pfizer and Moderna) planned for this week, beginning January 20, 2021, **except for residents** of long-term care homes and high risk retirement homes, and northern remote operations conducted by Ornge;
- Proceed with scheduled second dose vaccinations; and
- Pause the Toronto proof-of-concept immunization clinic, as of January 20, 2021.

To help us plan for scenarios of further shortage, we are making the following request, to be submitted in the attached template:

- Calculate your week-by-week need for Pfizer second doses, using the following parameters:
  - For long-term care and high-risk retirement home residents: use a standard dose interval of 27 days;
  - For staff and essential caregivers over the age of 70 years old: use a standard dose interval of 27 days; and
  - For all other individuals: use a standard dose interval of 42 days.
- With your available inventory of first doses (if any), determine your ability to vaccinate (first dose only) your long-term care and high-risk retirement home residents before February 15, 2021.

Please note that this data gathering is for planning purposes only and the planning scenario is not government direction. This is a rapidly evolving situation nation-wide and we will continue to keep you informed as updates are provided by the NOC.

We have developed the enclosed planning tool template to assist you. We are asking that you complete the attached template and send it to the Ministry Emergency Operations Centre at [EOCOperations.MOH@ontario.ca](mailto:EOCOperations.MOH@ontario.ca) **by noon, Thursday, January 21, 2021.**

Thank you for your resilience, partnership and expertise. This continues to be a challenging path, but the leadership and collaboration demonstrated by your organizations and your local partners is what will keep us on the path to success.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Ministry Emergency Operations Centre at [EOCOperations.MOH@ontario.ca](mailto:EOCOperations.MOH@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

***(Original signed by)***

General (Ret'd) Rick Hillier

Dr. David Williams

Alison Blair

c: Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health  
Mario Di Tommaso, Deputy Minister, Ministry of the Solicitor General  
Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care  
Denise Cole, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility  
Shawn Batise, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Indigenous Affairs  
Matthew Anderson, President and CEO, Ontario Health  
Ken Chan, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of the Solicitor General  
Erin Hannah, Associate Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care

Attachment

- Planning tool template