

Ministry of Health

Ministère de la Santé



Office of the Deputy Minister

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March 3, 2021

**MEMORANDUM TO: Health System Organizations and Providers**

**SUBJECT: Update on COVID-19 Planning and Actions**

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This week, the Health Coordination Table focused on the following key actions to enable Ontario's health care system to effectively respond to COVID-19:

- **Planning for the next phase of COVID-19 vaccine rollout in consideration of potential increased supply and the newly approved AstraZeneca vaccine.**
  - It is anticipated that the overall supply of vaccines available may increase over the course of the next several months as a result of increased availability from existing suppliers and the recently approved AstraZeneca vaccine.
  - The ministry will be publicly communicating the next phase of the vaccine roll out and the administration of vaccines to priority populations.
- **Ensuring sufficient supply of personal protective equipment within the provincial stockpile based on the modelling of high-risk scenarios.**
  - The ministry conducted a modelling exercise to determine the level of risk to the provincial stockpile of personal protective equipment in different high-risk scenarios. Within each of the scenarios, the ministry identified key response options to ensure the systems and structures are in place to prevent shortages to the provincial stockpile.
- **Supporting Infection, Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices across health and congregate living settings to reduce the risk of transmission.**
  - The ministry, in collaboration with Public Health Ontario, Ontario Health and other government partners, have fully implemented 30 IPAC hubs across the province. To support IPAC practices across congregate living settings, the hubs are led by hospitals or public health units, in partnership with IPAC experts, to coordinate access to IPAC expertise, tools and resources.

- The ministry, in collaboration with Public Health Ontario and IPAC hubs, is developing a new Self-Audit Program with the aim to improve IPAC practices and to reinforce strong practice across health and congregate living settings. This voluntary program is designed to increase adherence to IPAC audit practices by breaking down larger IPAC audits into smaller weekly tasks.
- **Reviewed the most recent scientific evidence on the Variants of Concern (VOCs) to inform advice to government on the ongoing pandemic response.**
  - The Science Advisory Table presented the latest data on the higher rate of reproduction of the VOCs in comparison to the traditional virus.

We thank you for your continued work to respond to the pandemic and implement a phased recovery.

Sincerely,

*(original signed by)*

Helen Angus  
Deputy Minister  
Ministry of Health

Dr. David Williams  
Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Ministry of Health

Matthew Anderson  
President and CEO  
Ontario Health