

# COVID-19 Vaccine Update

## Booster Dose Rollout



# Overview – Vaccine Rollout Milestones

- Ontario is tracking to well below the Lower Range scenario for ICU projections outlined by the Science Advisory Table on October 22.
- As a result of our cautious approach, the province continues to report one of the lowest rates of active cases in the country, well below the national average. Ontario is also tracking to well below the Lower Range scenario for ICU projections outlined by the Science Advisory Table on October 22.
- At the same time, the province continues to make progress through its Last Mile Strategy:
  - Over 88.3 % for 1st doses (individuals 12+)
  - 84.7 % for 2nd doses (individuals 12+)
  - More than 11 million people living in Ontario are fully vaccinated
  - 22,718,001 doses have been administered.
  - Since the launch of the vaccine certificate October 15, 2021, over 7 million enhanced vaccine certificates with official QR code have been downloaded through the [COVID-19 vaccination portal](#) and there have been over 1.3 million downloads of the Verify Ontario app.

# Booster Dose of the COVID-19 Vaccine – Current Context

- In August, Ontario became the first province to offer a third dose to immunocompromised population and a “booster” dose of the COVID-19 vaccine for those at highest-risk, providing them with an extra layer of protection against the Delta variant.
- Third doses of COVID-19 vaccines are being offered to individuals who are immunocompromised at an interval of eight weeks.
- Based on the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and in alignment with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), the province began offering boosters to group such as:
  - Transplant recipients
  - Patients with hematological cancers on active treatment
  - Recipients of an anti-CD20 agent
  - Residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, and First Nation elder care lodges, as well as seniors living in other congregate settings such as assisted-living facilities, chronic care hospitals and congregate seniors' apartment buildings
- More than 250,000 individuals are currently eligible to receive their third/booster dose. To date, more than 161,000 booster doses have been administered in Ontario, 65 per cent of those who are currently eligible.

# Booster Doses – Further Expanding Eligibility

- In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and other health experts, Ontario is expanding eligibility for booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to additional high-risk groups, approximately 2.75M individuals:
  - Individuals aged 70 and over (approximately 1.7M individuals)
  - Health care workers and designated essential caregivers in congregate settings (approximately 750K individuals)
  - Individuals who received a complete series of a viral vector vaccine: two doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine or one dose of the Janssen vaccine (approximately 200K individuals); and
  - First Nation, Inuit and Métis adults and their non-Indigenous household members (approximately 200K individuals).
- This decision aligns with evidence and recommendations provided by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).
- Offering the extra layer of protection provided by a booster dose will contribute to the fight against COVID-19.

# Booster Doses – Rationale for Additional Priority Groups

- **Individuals aged 70 and over** are being prioritized based on increased risk of gradual waning immunity six months after receiving their second dose and a high risk of severe illness from COVID-19.
- **Health care workers** are being prioritized based on increased risk of gradual waning immunity and a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to their work environments, which could result in an increased risk of transmission to vulnerable populations.
- **First Nation, Inuit and Métis adults and their non-Indigenous household members** are being prioritized due to increased risk of gradual waning immunity, as well as these communities having been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in Ontario and inequities related to the social determinants of health.
- Individuals aged 70 and over, First Nation, Inuit and Métis adults, and their non-Indigenous household members, and health care workers were also prioritized for early vaccination during Ontario's rollout of first and second doses due to their higher-risk of severe illness or high risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- **Individuals who received a complete series of a viral vector COVID-19 vaccine** are also included in this rollout as they started with a lower vaccine efficacy and may have a gradual waning immune response sooner than people who received a primary series that included at least one dose of an mRNA vaccine.

Evidence continues to show that a complete two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series provides strong protection against COVID-19 infection and severe outcomes, including against the Delta variant, in the general population

# Eligible Populations - Booking Your Booster Dose

- Beginning Saturday, November 6, eligible individuals will be able to book their booster dose appointment through:
  - The [COVID-19 vaccination portal](#) or by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre effective at 8:00 am.
  - Directly through public health units that use their own booking systems.
  - Select pharmacies. Use the [pharmacy locator](#) to find those that provide the booster dose.
  - Public health units are leading the booster dose rollout within their communities and have partnered with some primary care practices to deliver booster doses. Do not call your primary care provider to request an appointment.
  - Hospital-based health care workers are encouraged to reach out to their hospital employer to get vaccinated directly through their hospital's vaccination program
- Locations and timing for booster doses may vary by public health unit based on local planning and considerations.

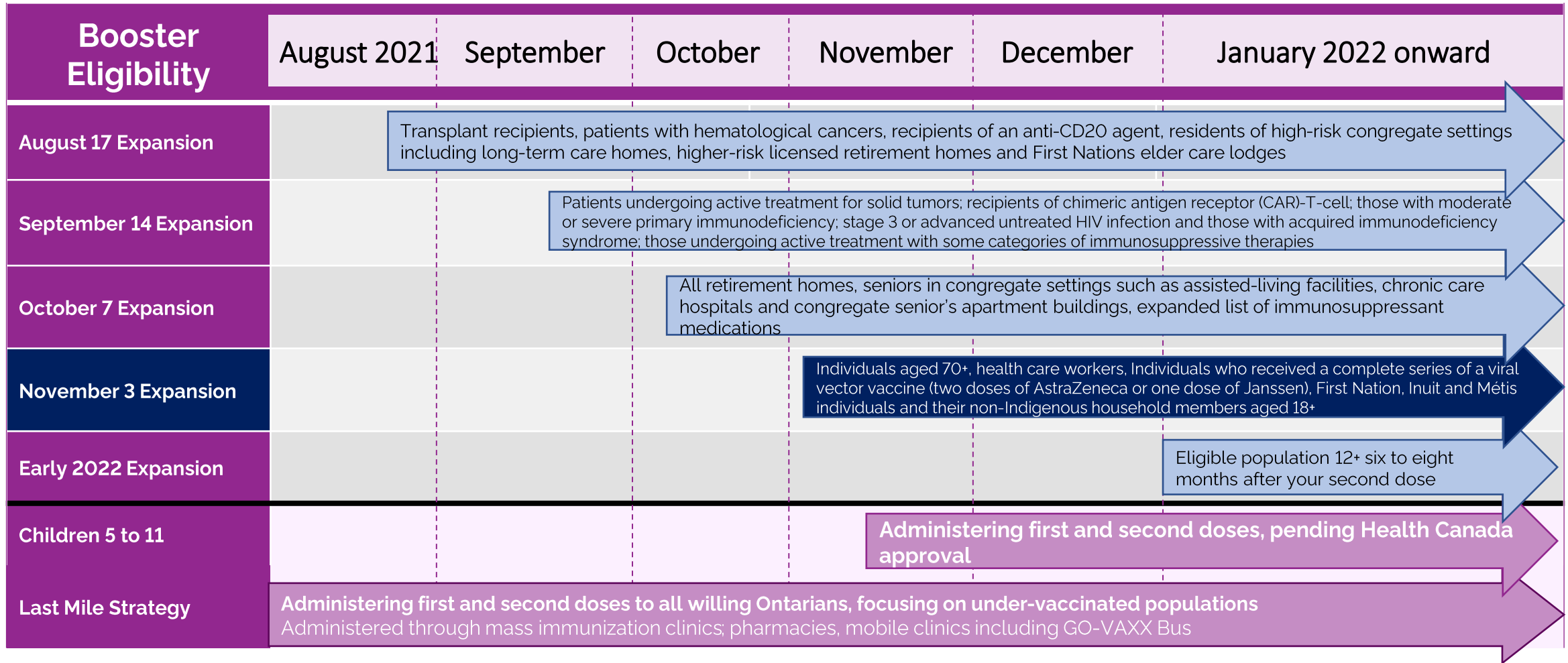
# Eligible Populations - Booking Your Booster Dose (cont'd)

- First Nation, Inuit and Métis populations (including non-indigenous household members) will have several options for receiving their booster dose:
  - Access to mass immunization clinics, pharmacies, pop-ups and all current types of clinics that are available for eligible booster populations, including Indigenous-led clinics. A self-attestation will need to be provided to verify that they fall into the eligible group for a booster dose.
  - For populations living in First Nation communities, follow-up efforts via First Nation-led clinics, Aboriginal Health Access Centres and other Indigenous service providers including Operation Remote Immunity (in the remote-far North) are being coordinated with public health units to ensure that these populations have access to their booster dose.
- Either mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may be used as a booster dose, regardless of which COVID-19 vaccine was used in the primary series. [...] Studies suggest that a booster dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine produces a very good immune response that is generally higher than the immune response after the primary series, has a favourable safety profile, and provides good short-term protection against infection. (NACI statement – October 29, 2021)
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# Overview of Booster Dose Eligibility

While the COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective, early evidence of waning immunity over time means the province is planning to gradually expand to all Ontarians over time. Like Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination rollout for first and second doses, expansion of eligibility for booster doses will be based on **age and risk**, with an interval of **six to eight months** from the second dose



Sequencing is expected to be based on the interval from the date of second dose, which naturally replicates the priorities from the first and second dose roll-out, including special populations like essential workers, older adults (e.g. 50-69), at-risk populations, and hot spot communities. Throughout the booster rollout, the government will continue to evaluate timing as the situation and evidence evolves.



# Gradual Expansion of Booster Doses

- While the COVID-19 vaccine is highly effective, the province is planning to expand eligibility for a booster dose to all Ontarians over time.
- During the height of Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine rollout, a large population of Ontarians received their first and second doses at a longer interval than indicated on the product monograph. This longer interval has now been shown to improve duration of immunity vaccine effectiveness, and the National Advisory Committee on Immunization now recommends an optimal interval of eight-week interval between first and second doses.
- Based on Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination rollout for first and second doses, expansion of eligibility for booster doses will be based on age and risk, with an interval of six to eight months from their second dose.
- Ontario is prepared to gradually expand eligibility to all Ontarians, to provide an extra layer of protection against the Delta variant guided by evidence of vaccine effectiveness and data on waning immunity, pending clinical recommendation.

# COVID-19 Vaccines for Children Aged 5 to 11

- COVID-19 vaccine eligibility for children aged 5 to 11 is subject to Health Canada approval and is anticipated to be coming this month.
- The Ontario government is working with public health units across the province to prepare to vaccinate children aged 5 to 11 and has received plans from all public health units.
- All public health units will offer at least one clinic at or near schools.
- Consent forms will be distributed through schools and will be available online and in paper at clinics.
- Parents or substitute decision makers of children aged 5 to 11 will, for the most part, have to provide consent on behalf of the child at the time of the appointment before their child can receive a vaccine.
- The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5-11 is a distinct formulation at a lower dose that will be provided to Ontario once the vaccine is approved by Health Canada.

# Fall immunization plan and Last Mile: Already Underway

Ontario will focus on expanded third doses until the vaccine for 5–11-year-olds is approved and provided to Ontario. Once available, priority will shift to the rapid provision of first doses for children.

	Current: Last Mile & Current 3 <sup>rd</sup> Doses/ Booster	Booster Expansion	Children aged 5-11
Objectives	Vaccinate <b>all willing eligible Ontarians, focusing on under-vaccinated populations and vaccinate the most vulnerable Ontarians with a booster or a third dose for immunocompromised populations.</b>	Vaccinate <b>all willing eligible Ontarians, focusing on 70+, First Nations Inuit Metis (FNIM), and Health Care Workers (HCWs) with a booster</b>	Vaccinate <b>5–11-year-old Ontarians with their 1<sup>st</sup> dose of Pfizer vaccine</b>
Primary Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mass immunization clinics</li><li>• Pharmacy</li><li>• Mobile teams</li><li>• Pop up clinics</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>70+:</b> Mass Clinic, Pharmacy, Hospital, and Primary care</li><li>• <b>FNIM (remote and on reserve):</b> Mobile clinics, Operation Remote Immunity, Indigenous-led clinics</li><li>• <b>FNIM (urban Indigenous-led clinic):</b> Mass clinics, Pharmacy, Mobile clinics</li><li>• <b>HCWs:</b> Mass clinics, Hospitals, Pharmacy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mass immunization clinics</li><li>• School-based clinics</li><li>• Pharmacy</li><li>• Primary care</li><li>• Mobile teams</li><li>• Children hospitals</li></ul> <p><b>Note: Every PHU will offer select school-based clinics</b></p>

# Appendices

# List of Health Care Workers Eligible for Booster Doses

Regulated health professionals and any staff member, contract worker, student/trainee, registered volunteer, or other designated essential caregivers currently working in-person in a health care organization, including workers that are not providing direct patient care and are frequently in the patient environment (i.e. cleaning staff, research staff, other administrative staff) are included in the below:

- All hospital and acute care staff including:
  - Critical Care Units, Emergency Departments and Urgent Care Departments, COVID-19 Medical Units, Code Blue Teams, rapid response teams
  - General internal medicine and other specialists, Surgical care, Obstetrics
- All patient-facing health care workers/staff involved in the COVID-19 response:
  - COVID-19 Specimen Collection Centers, COVID-19 Isolation Centers
  - Mobile Testing Teams, COVID-19 Laboratory Services, Teams supporting outbreak response (e.g., IPAC teams supporting outbreak management, inspectors in the patient environment)
  - COVID-19 vaccine clinics and mobile immunization teams
  - Current members of Ontario's Emergency Medical Assistance Team (EMAT)

# List of Health Care Workers Eligible for Booster Doses (cond't)

- Medical First Responders (ORNGE, paramedics, firefighters providing medical first response, police and special constables providing medical first response as part of their regular duties).
- Health care workers and designated essential caregivers in congregate settings (assisted living, correctional settings, shelters, LTCHs/RHs, supportive housing, hospices and palliative care settings, etc.)
- Home and community health care workers, providing in-person care, including:
  - Needle exchange/syringe programs & supervised consumption and treatment services
  - Indigenous health care service providers including but not limited to: Aboriginal Health Access Centers, Indigenous Community Health Centers, Indigenous Interprofessional Primary Care Teams, and Indigenous Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics
  - Community health centres, chronic homecare, birth centres, dentistry and dental hygiene, Pharmacies, Primary care, Walk-in clinics, gynecology/obstetrics, Midwifery, Nurse practitioner-led clinics/Contract nursing agencies, Otolaryngology (ENT), medical and surgical specialities, medical transport, laboratory services, independent health facilities, health care providers in developmental services, mental health and addictions services.
  - Health care workers in schools/daycare/campus, sexual health clinics, community diagnostic imaging, dietary/nutrition, audiology, naturopathy, holistic care, chiropractic, chronic pain clinics, kinesiology/physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychiatry, acupuncture, registered massage therapy, psychotherapy, social work, public health.