

**COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution
Secretariat**

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**Secrétariat de la distribution des
vaccins contre la COVID-19**

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<By email>

March 1, 2021

Carey Smith
Registrar
Bereavement Authority of Ontario
carey.smith@thebao.ca

Dear Carey Smith:

Thank you for connecting with me to discuss Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine program and the prioritization of the bereavement sector professionals. The bereavement sector provides valuable work especially within the context of increased COVID-19 mortality.

On December 14, 2020, Ontario launched the first phase of the three-phased implementation plan of Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine program. The government's approach to identifying key populations to receive the vaccine first was informed by science and prioritizes population groups that are at greatest risk of COVID-19. This was the basis of the [ethical framework](#) for COVID-19 vaccine distribution. In this first phase, we must work with the small number of vaccines that we have been allocated to focus on those priority groups most at-risk.

As the rollout of vaccinations continues, Ontario has mapped out the next steps for transitioning into Phase Two and an approach for identifying the next groups to receive the vaccination, as more vaccines are received by the province. This was announced on [January 13, 2021](#). Groups eligible to receive vaccines as part of Phase Two of the vaccine program will include:

- Older adults, beginning with those 80 and older and decreasing in five-year increments over the course of the vaccine rollout;
- people who live and work in high-risk congregate settings (for example, shelters, community living);
- frontline essential workers, including first responders, teachers and other education staff and the food processing industry;
- individuals with high-risk chronic conditions and their caregivers; and
- other populations and communities facing barriers related to the determinants of health across Ontario who are at greater COVID-19 risk.

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Steps are underway to identify the subpopulations within each Phase Two category, as further information is made available on vaccine types and supply. This includes identifying which sectors fall under essential workers. These decisions will be based on the latest medical advice and scientific evidence and followed by a plan for sequencing vaccination within the categories. Some of the key considerations that will inform prioritization within the essential worker category include; risk of exposure to COVID-19 by the worker, risk of severe disease in the population the sector serves and the criticality of the service.

Ontario's supply of COVID-19 vaccines is reliant on the Government of Canada's procurement capabilities and allocation methodology. The Task Force is prepared for these supply fluctuations and will update Ontario's vaccine rollout plan, as required.

Please continue to visit the [Ontario COVID-19 website](#) for updates.

Sincerely,

COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force Secretariat