

## COVID-19 Update

	Outbreaks	Ont. cases	Deaths	LTC deaths	% LTC deaths
August 18	12	40,870	2,793	1,847	66.1%
November 18	103	99,372	3,443	2,189	63.6%
December 7	116	130,910	3,808	2,396	62.9%
December 20	154	155,930	4,150	2,564	61.8%

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-ontario-is-responding-covid-19#section-0>

Since the relative tranquility of the summer, the increase in cases of COVID-19 over the past four months is 281%. This increase reflects resurgence in the community and increased testing. Nearly half of provincial deaths due to COVID-19 have occurred in the autumnal wave (48.6%). Unlike the lethal spring wave, long term care deaths represent 52.8% of Ontario's COVID-19 deaths (Aug 18 – Dec 20);

### COVID 19 VACCINATION

COVID-19 vaccination of LTC home staff began last week. Ontario expects to receive 90,000 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech doses from the federal government before the end of the year. This vaccine is the first mRNA vaccine approved for use in humans. To date, mRNA has been successfully used in cancer treatments, and research into its value for vaccinations has been ongoing for over ten years. Detailed consumer information about the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is found at the government website: <https://covid-vaccine.canada.ca/info/pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-en.html>



Long term care staff are priority to receive the vaccine. Clinician leaders have a key role to educate and encourage all staff to get vaccinated.

Vaccination began last week at two pilot sites, University Health Network in Toronto and The Ottawa Hospital. Health care workers who are providing care in hospitals and LTC received the vaccine. Distribution of the Pfizer vaccine involves travel logistics, availability of equipment necessary to safely store the vaccine at -70 degrees, and trained staff to handle the vaccine. On December 18, seventeen additional hospital sites were added. Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre was selected to test travel logistics in Northern Ontario and support the administration of the vaccine in Indigenous and remote communities.

The Pfizer vaccine must be stored in ultra-low temperatures of minus 80 to 60 degrees Celsius and protected from light until ready to use. The vaccine may be thawed and stored at +2 to +8 degrees for up to 120 hours (5 days), or at room temperature for no more than two hours.

Company	Type of vaccine	Doses ordered
<b>Purchased vaccines under review</b>		
Moderna	mRNA vaccine	up to 56 million doses
AstraZeneca	viral vector vaccine	up to 20 million doses
Johnson & Johnson/ Janssen Inc.	viral vector	up to 38 million doses
<b>Purchased vaccines not yet under review by Health Canada</b>		
Sanofi and GSK	adjuvanted recombinant protein-based vaccine	up to 72 million doses
Novavax	protein-based vaccine	up to 76 million doses
Medicago	virus-like particle vaccine	up to 76 million doses
<b>Total ordered</b>		<b>up to 338 million doses (169 million people)</b>

The approval of vaccinations that are more mobile will assure protection of our LTC residents. Canada has signed agreements with a number of pharmaceutical companies to establish a guaranteed supply base of vaccines. Most of the vaccines listed here require two doses to be effective.

### A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE, A BETTER PLACE TO WORK

“These have been challenging times, as the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the weaknesses and inadequacies within the long-term care system. These are issues that had been developing over decades of neglect and underfunding.” Dr. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of LTC, says in the opening message of Ontario’s LTC Staffing Plan for 2021 – 2025, which is attached. OLTCC responded to last week’s announcement:

“Ontario Long Term Care Clinicians represent physicians who provide front-line care in Ontario’s long term care homes. Our members include nurse practitioners and pharmacists. We are pleased with the government’s commitment to significantly increase the direct care that our residents receive—four hours of direct personal and an annual increase in funding of \$1.9 billion by 2025. The residents who we look after, have increased complexity and personal care needs. Their care takes time. Increasing direct personal care will address many issues such as feeding, positioning, skin care and hygiene. OLTCC also recognizes the importance increasing the availability of other health care professions, like physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Their work increases mobility, prevents fall, increases and maintains functions of daily living. These are measures to preserve functional independence and improve quality of life. Long term care will be a better place to live. We believe that it will make long term care a better place to work, which is so important to recruit and retain enthusiastic health care professionals to care for our residents.”

#### OMA COVID 19 Survey

Members of the OMA Section for LTC and Care of the Elderly have received an invitation for the following survey, which focuses on LTC homes regulated under the *Long-Term Care Homes Act* (2007). The purpose of the survey is to gather information about LTC long-term care delivery during the pandemic. If you have not already completed the survey, here it here is the link:

<https://insights.oma.org/c/a/6VME2WoOgyB918nBJCCHHP?t=1>