

**Health  
Services**

Office of the  
Medical Officer  
of Health

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peelregion.ca

September 8, 2021

**Re: Thank you and encouragement for all community service providers to be vaccinated**

Dear Community Service Providers in Peel,

As you see and hear every day, Peel has been hard hit by COVID-19. Since March 2020, over 114,000 Peel residents have been diagnosed with COVID-19. COVID-19 has upended our lives, overwhelmed our public health and healthcare systems and taken the lives and livelihoods of many in Peel. Disparities that have long existed in our communities have been exposed and this pandemic has made clear the challenges that are faced by many of our residents.

Community services such as yours have been essential in supporting Peel residents through this unprecedented time. You have been the safety net, the compassionate advocate, and the essential support for many. You have done so much for the community, despite challenges in your work and own personal lives. You have been dedicated, resilient, and brave in the face of uncertainty.

Fortunately, Peel's vaccination program has been a success. Over 83% of people who are eligible (12+) have received at least one dose and over 75% are considered fully vaccinated. These high rates of vaccine coverage are essential to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and protect those who are vulnerable or remain susceptible to infection.

We know that two doses are required for sufficient levels of immunity. Given that no vaccine is 100% effective, we can expect cases to occur among those who are fully vaccinated. However, high levels of vaccination will help reduce the significant risk posed by pockets of unvaccinated people and the risk of severe outcomes in those who are fully vaccinated.

But we have now reached the hardest part of our vaccination program. We are transitioning into a strategy to reach the almost 20% of our population who have not yet received any of the benefits of vaccination. The strategies we need to reach this population are different and will include targeted, community-focused efforts aimed at those who experience barriers to vaccination or are hesitant about COVID-19 vaccination.

To help us achieve our goal of over 90% of eligible Peel residents being fully vaccinated, we need your help. ***We need everyone, including all community service providers and all their staff and volunteers, to get vaccinated.***

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The fourth wave of COVID-19 is upon us. Due to a significant increase in COVID-19 activity in Ontario and the highly transmissible Delta variant, the province has paused our exit from the Roadmap to Reopen. Scientific modelling shows us that we need all eligible Ontarians to be fully vaccinated if we are to protect the vulnerable in our communities. This includes those who cannot be vaccinated (for example, children less than 12 years old) and those at highest risk for serious outcomes (for example, seniors and those with health conditions).

I also urge everyone to remember that even with high rates of vaccination, we must continue to adhere to public health measures including indoor masking, physical distancing, hand hygiene and others. These measures are essential to reducing risk of transmission to the lowest level possible.

Thank you again for your on-going service and support.

Sincerely,



Lawrence C. Loh, MD, MPH, FCFP, FRCPC, FACPM (he/his)  
Medical Officer of Health