

COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program Frequently Asked Questions

The COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program provides an opportunity for primary care, hospital, and long-term care/retirement home organizations to administer COVID-19 vaccines to their patients/residents. Delivering COVID-19 vaccines within various health care settings provides residents of Middlesex-London additional ways to access the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as the opportunity to discuss any vaccine concerns with their healthcare provider.

Why should I participate in this program?

Healthcare providers play an instrumental role in supporting vaccine uptake. For many people, having a personal conversation about a vaccine with their healthcare provider is the key to getting vaccinated. Furthermore, some people may experience challenges being vaccinated at a mass vaccination clinic. Having the option to be vaccinated by their trusted healthcare provider may be the only way to get them vaccinated. By participating in this program, your organization can provide an important service for your patients/residents and be a part of the community response during these unprecedented times.

What makes administering COVID-19 vaccines different from administering other vaccines?

Given the context of this global pandemic, delivering the COVID-19 vaccine at your organization is currently different from other vaccines, such as the seasonal influenza vaccine. There are some key reasons why administering COVID-19 vaccines are different:

- Provincial requirement for all COVID-19 vaccinations to be documented in the COVax database.
- Different storage and handling requirements for COVID-19 vaccines.

How will I be supported to help deliver COVID-19 vaccines?

Our COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program works with you to offer this important service to your patients/residents. The differences between COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines requires more from all of us. Thanks to feedback from our partners, we have been working hard to make it easier to bring organizations into the program, learn the COVax software, order vaccine, and manage their inventory.

Here are some of the key improvements:

- Streamlined and condensed training process (1hr/staff member).
- Enhanced Informatics Support, including a **helpline**, to help navigate COVax.
- Reduced inventory reporting from daily to weekly.
- Efficient ordering using our new Vaccine Ordering App.
- Access to public health nurses to answer your vaccine related questions.

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I heard I need to sign a contract. Is that true?

There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for you to sign as an agreement between your organization and the MLHU.

- The MLHU has a contract with the Provincial Government and is accountable for all COVID-19 vaccine in the region.
- We are required to have signed contracts with all organizations receiving and administering the vaccine on our behalf.
- The MOU outlines your responsibilities including the required and acceptable use of the COVax software and the proper vaccine storage and handling requirements.

Why do I have to use specific software to document COVID-19 vaccinations?

The Provincial Government has developed new software for the COVID-19 vaccination response called COVax. All COVID-19 vaccinations across the province must be documented using this software. This facilitates accurate estimates of vaccine coverage rates and the current vaccine passport system. The COVax system may become more widely adopted for more vaccines in the future, making this an excellent opportunity to become familiar with the system.

How do I learn how to use this software?

Learning the COVax software is a key part of the training we offer. Based on feedback from our program participants, we have recently improved the training to include:

- Self-directed hands-on learning.
- Short videos of key features.
- Virtual one-on-one session with Informatics Support staff for your Site Facilitator.
- Informatics Support, including a **helpline**, to support you in navigating COVax.

How long does the training take?

Each staff member that will be using the COVax software is required to complete one hour of online training prior to getting their COVax login credentials. Your site facilitator will also be offered the opportunity to have an optional one-on-one virtual training session.

What COVID-19 vaccines can I have on site?

Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines are currently available to order for healthcare providers in the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution program. These may come in different formulations for primary series or booster doses, and/or for different age groupings.

How do I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

After your organization has signed their Memorandum of Understanding and staff have completed training, you can order the COVID-19 vaccine using our new Vaccine Ordering App. You would be responsible to pick up the vaccine at the MLHU CitiPlaza location, the same as all other vaccines that you may order.

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How will I know all the different vaccine requirements?

We know it can be challenging given the different storage and handling requirements for each vaccine. We will make all of this information available to you when you receive your vaccine order and your product will be labelled with the relevant dates, so you know when it expires. If you need additional information, our public health nurses are available by phone to support you with any of your vaccine-related questions.

How easy are the COVID-19 vaccines to work with?

The key difference between COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines is the fragile nature of the mRNA vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccines require some extra caution when handling the vial and drawing-up the product to ensure that the mRNA is not damaged. Always handle gently and do not drop or shake the product.

Some of the Pfizer vaccines require reconstitution with a diluent. You will be provided with a video to walk you through the steps as well as written instructions to have by your side. Moderna vaccine does not require any reconstitution and is drawn-up much like a multi-dose influenza vaccine vial.

Administration of the vaccine itself is the easy part! COVID-19 is administered as an intramuscular injection in the deltoid muscle just like an influenza vaccine.

I cannot hold a vaccine clinic due to limited space. Can I vaccinate individual patients?

Yes, there are options for you to vaccinate individual patients.

- You can group a series of individual appointments in your schedule for vaccinating patients.
- Each vaccine has a time period that it can be used after the vial is first punctured:
 - Pfizer – 12 hours
 - Moderna – 24 hours
- It has also been deemed acceptable to waste small amounts of vaccine if that means increasing vaccination coverage in our community. This is particularly important for your patients who may not seek vaccination otherwise. Therefore, you may order a full vial of vaccine to vaccinate just one patient if necessary. In optimal circumstances, you will have enough patients arranged in the same time period to use up a full vial.
 - Any vaccine that is wasted is documented as wastage in COVax (same day as the rest of the vial was administered) and physically disposed of following normal procedures for biomedical waste.

If you have any additional questions, please email COVIDVaccine.Deployment@mlhu.on.ca.

If you are interested in joining the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Program, please click on the appropriate link below to provide your contact information. We will follow up with next steps.

- [Primary Care](#)
- [LTCH/RH/Hospital](#)

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