

December 7, 2020

AMO Policy Update – Initial Vaccination Approach, AG Annual Report, Wetland Conservation Program

Ontario Approach on Key Populations to Vaccinate First

The Ontario government is getting ready to [distribute COVID-19 vaccines](#) as soon as they are received, beginning with vaccinating vulnerable populations and those who care for them. As recommended by the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force, the Province has now identified key populations to receive the vaccine first, including long-term care and retirement home residents and the staff who provide care to these groups. The government has stated that this approach is informed by science and prioritizes population groups that are at greatest risks of COVID-19.

Groups to receive the early vaccine doses in the first few months of the Ontario immunization program will include:

- residents, staff, essential caregivers, and other employees of congregate living settings (e.g. long-term care homes and retirement homes) that provide care for seniors as they are at higher risk of infection and serious illness from COVID-19;
- health care workers, including hospital employees, other staff who work or study in hospitals, and other health care personnel;
- adults in Indigenous communities, including remote communities where risk of transmission is high; and
- adult recipients of chronic home health care.

As well, the Province will be prioritizing the rollout of the vaccine in regions with the highest rates of COVID-19 infection, including those in the Red-Control and Lockdown zones. The immunization program will focus on health care workers and the most vulnerable populations in those regions.

It is expected that clarification on who comprises the group of staff who work/study in hospitals and other health care personnel will be provided shortly (i.e. inclusion of paramedics in this grouping).

We have been assured that as further information is available about the various type

of vaccines and availability of doses, additional details related to the implementation of the COVID-19 immunization program will be provided by the Province.

Auditor General 2020 Annual Report

The Auditor General, Bonnie Lysyk, has released her [reflections](#) and the *2020 Annual Report*. It focuses on consumer protection, oversight, and operational effectiveness. The Report also includes follow up reports on recommendations from previous Annual Reports. The 13 value-for-money audits in the *2020 Annual Report* are summarized in this [News Release](#). AMO staff will review the Report and follow up with any analysis from a municipal lens if required.

New Ontario Wetland Conservation Program

The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, has announced a new \$30 million, five-year [Wetlands Conservation Partner Program](#) to help create and restore wetlands in the Great Lakes watershed. In the first year, Ontario is providing \$6 million to Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) focusing on restoration projects in the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie watersheds. Later years of the program will focus on wetlands in other Great Lakes watersheds and inland waterways. Wetlands help to improve water quality and to manage stormwater as well as play an important role in ecosystem health.

AMO's [COVID-19 Resources](#) page is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to covid19@amo.on.ca.