



## **IMPORTANT REGIONAL NOTICE: COVID-19 VACCINE PLAN**

January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Dear community members of the James and Hudson Bay Region:

On January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 WAHA sent out a notice explaining details about Health Canada's approved use of the Moderna Vaccine in Canada to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In preparation for the vaccine's arrival to the Region, WAHA has been working with Porcupine Health Unit, as well as our Federal and Provincial partners on a plan to distribute the vaccine in two phases. The phases and timelines related to the vaccine roll-out are as follows.

### **Phase one**

January 6<sup>th</sup>: phase one of the plan started and the first Moderna COVID-19 vaccines were delivered by ORNGE to Moosonee to assist WAHA with its anticipated regional vaccination roll-out. Those identified to receive the vaccine first were:

- Elders residing in our congregate settings of Moose Factory, Attawapiskat, and Fort Albany.
- Elders in Complex Continuing Care & Alternate Level of Care (CCC/ALC) beds.
- Health Care providers who provide care in patient care areas.

January 8<sup>th</sup>: Gertrude Johnstone, a Moose Factory elder and Moose Cree First Nation Band member was the first person to receive the Health Canada approved COVID-19 Moderna vaccine at the Weeneebayko General Hospital in Moose Factory, Ontario. A total of 91 in the phase one group have received vaccines in Moose Factory since January 8<sup>th</sup> and clinics have been conducted at WGH from January 8<sup>th</sup> up to January 15<sup>th</sup>.

January 13<sup>th</sup>: WAHA's vaccination clinics moved to the coastal communities of Attawapiskat and Fort Albany. On January 13<sup>th</sup> in Attawapiskat, 3 elderly inpatients and 7 staff at the Attawapiskat Hospital received COVID-19 vaccines. In Fort Albany, 5 elders and 5 staff were vaccinated on this same day.

January 14<sup>th</sup> onward: WAHA will continue vaccinating its staff and elderly inpatients for Moose Factory, Attawapiskat and Fort Albany, working to move to phase two of the vaccination plans.

### **Phase two**

Over the next several weeks, phase two of the plan will focus on providing the vaccine to the rest of the community members, in all the communities for the James and Hudson Bay region. WAHA will be working with a team that will be assembled by the province, utilizing ORNGE paramedics to visit each community. WAHA/local public health care providers will deliver the program after the team visit. Dates are not yet available for the phase two plan, but WAHA will inform communities as more details become available.

Please note that receiving the vaccine is voluntary, but it is an important opportunity for those in the Region to participate, to protect themselves from COVID-19. It will be offered to the following high-risk groups:

- Residents and staff of shared living settings that provide care for seniors
- Health care workers who have direct contact with patients, including those who work in health care settings and personal support workers.
- Adults 65 years of age and older

- Adults in Indigenous communities (18 years of age and older)

On January 20, clinics will commence in both Fort Albany and Attawapiskat, Ontario, to vaccinate fifty participants who meet the eligibility criteria in each community. On January 20-22, clinics in Moosonee will begin to vaccinate participants who meet the eligibility criteria, as well as elders and vulnerable patients residing in congregate living settings.

### **Phase 3**

On January 26, phase three of the plan will begin, which includes mass vaccination clinics in all communities. Those identified for the vaccine are:

- residents, staff, essential caregivers (including family caregivers) and other employees in congregate living settings for seniors
- health care workers, including hospital employees, staff who work or study in hospitals and health care personnel
- adults 18+ who reside in Indigenous communities

The mass vaccination clinics are tentatively scheduled on:

- Peawanuck: January 26, 2021
- Kashechewan: February 1, 2021
- Attawapiskat: February 8, 2021
- Fort Albany: February 15, 2021
- Moosonee: March 1, 2021
- Moose Factory: March 1, 2021

As each community has a differing population, clinics will occur over multiple days. Currently, ORNGE in collaboration with WAHA, Porcupine Health Unit, Indigenous Services Canada, and the First Nations Inuit Health Branch aim to have the first dose phase of the mass clinics completed in our region by March 12, 2021.

Information about how the vaccine works, the level of protection provided and the risk/benefits of the vaccine has been made available and efforts will continue to inform community members through local public health nurses, radio and social media messaging, printed documents, provincial and federal government websites, WAHA website/links and your local hospital or clinic health care providers. WAHA also encourages community members to contact their Chief and Council, Town Administration and Pandemic Groups based on where they live within the Region.

To learn more about the province of Ontario's immunization program and the phased roll-out, as well as the vaccinations approved for use in Ontario (Moderna and Pfizer BioNTech), visit <https://covid-19.ontario/covid-19-vaccines-ontario>

Should you have vaccination questions, please contact the Vaccination Planning Team WAHA at 705-658-4544, by email at [vaccine@waha.ca](mailto:vaccine@waha.ca) or check our website [www.waha.ca/covid-19](http://www.waha.ca/covid-19) for continued updates.

Thank you and WAHA looks forward to sharing more information about the vaccine plan as it becomes available

Best wishes and stay safe!

Weeneebayko Area Health Authority