

RCD COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Committee

For Immediate Release

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Renfrew County and District Will Receive Additional Doses of AstraZeneca Vaccine Enabling Some Age Groupings to Get Vaccinated Weeks Earlier Than Anticipated

As part of the Ontario Government's expanding rollout of COVID-19 vaccines, the Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is excited to announce that our region has received an allocation of AstraZeneca vaccine.

This means that residents aged 55 years of age and over will be able to book vaccination appointments at Renfrew County and District's public clinics, in addition to local pharmacies, weeks before they originally would have been able to receive their vaccine at a public clinic based on age group eligibility.

All appointments for the AstraZeneca vaccine will be booked online through the Renfrew County and District COVID-19 Vaccine Registration System at www.rcdhu.com. Appointments using AstraZeneca will be clearly identified as part of the booking process since there are age restrictions for its use. If you cannot register online, call RCDHU at **613-735-9724 or **1-800-267-1097 ext. 200**. Please leave **one message only with your name and number**.**

"While we recognize that there is some public hesitancy regarding the AstraZeneca vaccine, we must remember that this vaccine is the driver of Britain's highly successful COVID-19 vaccination campaign and, to date, no cases of adverse events following immunization have been reported in Canada," said Dr. Robert Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health, RCDHU, referring to documented cases of blood clots which have occurred in certain individuals following immunization.

In addition, he noted that Health Canada has indicated that the benefits of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine continue to outweigh the risks, making it is safe for use in individuals 55 years of age and over. "I, for one, will be getting the AstraZeneca vaccine at my vaccination appointment this week and have no concerns in doing so based on the studies and research that have taken place," Dr. Cushman said.

Health Canada has reassured Canadians in recent days and weeks that the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine continues to be safe and effective at protecting them against COVID-19 and encourages people to get immunized with any of the COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized for use in Canada.

Dr. Richard Johnson, Primary Care Lead for the RCDHU Vaccine Distribution Command Table said Health Canada has a robust monitoring system in place for vaccines which should help

instill confidence in the vaccines being authorized and the guidelines around how they are being directed to be used.

“In Canada, the provinces are administering the COVIDSHIELD version of the AstraZeneca vaccine and Health Canada has not received any reports of these rare adverse effects to date,” Dr. Johnson said. “Health Canada is consulting with scientific experts in Canada and internationally to discuss the very rare events and continues to be in regular contact with international regulators and the manufacturer of the AstraZeneca vaccine to review all evidence as it becomes available.”

“Our region has had tremendous uptake to date on COVID-19 vaccinations in all of the eligibility groupings which is why our distribution timeline continues to be out of alignment with the provincial rollout,” Dr. Johnson said, adding that the provincial allocation of vaccine doses for Renfrew County and District is not enough to meet demand.

For details specific to vaccination registration and appointments (i.e., what you need to bring), visit the [COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment Checklist](#). Visit the following resources for more information on [What you need to know about your COVID-19 vaccine appointment \(Ministry of Health\)](#) and what to expect [After your COVID-19 vaccine \(Ministry of Health\)](#).

For more information, visit the [COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions](#) or [RCDHU's website](#) or call 613-732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097.

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