

# NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: April 17, 2021

## **UPDATE: COVID-19 Vaccine Appointments Available for Highest-Risk Individuals with Health Conditions and their Essential Caregiver**

NIPISSING & PARRY SOUND, ON – On Saturday, April 17, 2021, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) was informed of a change from the Ministry of Health to the eligibility of highest-risk individuals with health conditions and their essential caregivers.

### **Patient Eligibility**

Individuals 18 years of age and older with the following highest-risk health conditions are eligible to book an appointment to receive their COVID-19 vaccination in Ontario:

- Organ transplant recipients (including patients waitlisted for transplant);
- Hematopoietic stem cell transplant recipients;
- People with neurological diseases in which respiratory function may be compromised (e.g., motor neuron disease, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis);
- Haematological malignancy diagnosed less than one year ago;
- Kidney disease eGFR < 30; and
- One essential caregiver for individuals in the groups listed above.

### **Eligibility for 16-week interval exceptions**

On Saturday, April 17, 2021, the Health Unit was also informed of a change from the Ministry of Health to the eligibility for vaccine intervals for highest-risk individuals with health conditions.

Second dose interval exception includes individuals:

- with malignant hematologic disorders on immunocompromising therapy (chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy);
- nonhematologic malignant solid tumors on immunocompromising therapy (chemotherapy, targeted therapies, immunotherapy);
- transplant recipients (including solid organ transplants and hematopoietic stem cell transplants), given evidence of reduced immune response to vaccination in these individuals.

As second dose intervals vary depending on the vaccine product, the second dose will be discussed at the first vaccine appointment. For those eligible for the second dose interval exception, a letter of confirmation from

the health care provider treating the individual for the highest-risk condition **is required** at the time of the first vaccine appointment. Individuals who are receiving cancer treatment at Northeast Cancer Centre on or before April 16, 2021 **will not be required** to obtain a letter, as a list of eligible individuals has been provided to the Health Unit. Individuals starting care after April 16, 2021 will need to obtain a letter.

A letter of confirmation from the health care provider treating the individual for the highest-risk conditions is **not** required for individuals who do not meet the requirements for a 16-week interval exception.

The Health Unit's Call Centre can be reached Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-800-563-2808, for individuals who have questions or are looking to book an appointment.

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### **Media Inquiries:**

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