PAGME COVID VACCINATION Q&A

Preamble
Health care workers (HCWs) are at risk of acquiring COVID-19 at work. Ontario’s Ministry of Health places HCWs in Phase 1 of the provincial COVID-19 Vaccine distribution plan. Because vaccine demand exceeds supply, guidelines have been issued for a stepwise approach to HCW prioritization based on 1. sectors and settings, 2. level of community risk, and 3. individual risk. Individual organizations are responsible for developing enabling policies and strategies to support staff to get their immunization, considering among other things the risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 based on worker role/responsibility and the risk of severe disease or outcomes from COVID-19 among the patient population served. Thus, while the principles of the framework apply across the province, there may be some variation in implementation from one site to another depending on the local context.

The purpose of this document is to address questions relevant to COVID-19 vaccination of PG trainees.

Q1. Are learners being considered in the roll out for vaccine at the teaching hospitals?
A: Health care learners are being considered in the same risk matrix as staff at the hospital. Those with front line responsibilities are considered higher priority than those without front line responsibilities.

Q2. I/ a learner in my program is has not received any vaccine yet.
A: There is a shortage of vaccine province wide. Once vaccine becomes available, vaccination will resume according to the priorities established at the site.

Q3. I/ a learner in my program has been on maternity leave and would like to be vaccinated before returning or starting clinical work on a specified date.
A: Assuming vaccine is available, this may be possible at some of the sites if you are returning to a role that places you in the priority level for vaccination. Options may include putting your name on the vaccine registry a month before your return or arranging through the local Education Office.

Q4. I/ a learner in my program is doing academic research/ non-clinical work, and may or may not be either redeployed during COVID and/ or do occasional clinical call.
A: Learners with clinical contact are higher on the priority list than those doing research or non-clinical work. If you have no current or foreseeable clinical work you will be vaccinated as per your hospital’s priority listing. If you are occasionally taking call or will be redeployed to clinical work, please make that known to the site where you are/ will be doing that work. You should receive the same priority listing as other staff/ trainees who are in that role.
Q5. I / a learner in my program is on a clinical rotation at a community site.
A: Learner whose programs assign them to a hospital base should seek vaccination according to guidelines at the base hospital.

Q6. I / a learner in my program is on a medical leave of absence.
A: At most sites, HCWs who are working from home or not working are low on the priority list for vaccination. Please see answer to Q3.

Q7. We are keeping PGME informed of learners who are having or foresee challenges being vaccinated. What is PGME doing with this information?
A: The information we receive is being collated in an effort to identify gaps and clarify solutions. Producing this Q&A is one example of clarifying solutions to incoming questions. If an issue does not have a solution we will ring the issue forward to those who can help develop one.

References