

More than 100,000 vaccine doses administered in Peel

By Brock Weir

A positive milestone has been reached as more than 105,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered across Peel Region by Monday, March 22.

“As Peel Public Health, community partners and the team behind Peel's Community Mass Vaccination Plan (MVP) mark the milestone of over 100,000 doses of vaccine in the arms of our seniors, health care workers and Indigenous adults, we're gradually turning the tide in our fight against COVID-19,” said the Region in a statement on Monday.

The rollout of both vaccine doses has been completed in Peel's long-term care homes and high-risk retirement home residents and staff, well before the Provincial guideline. The rollout has also resulted in the opening of Public Health Vaccination Clinics across the Region, as well as strengthened partnerships with health care partners to offer clinics in area hospitals. Public Health also participated in a Primary Care Pilot Program with partners in Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga.

“Reaching this milestone represents a significant step forward,” said Dr. Lawrence Loh, Peel's Medical Officer of Health. “I'm so thankful for our partners, our planning teams, and the frontline workers who are working day in and day out to grow capacity in the system, and invite in more and more residents and workers in Peel to be vaccinated. This milestone is also a reminder that we have a lot of work ahead of us. We've learned that taking care of each other during the pandemic involves a number of measures – and vaccination is one important piece of that journey towards health and recovery.”

Peel is currently booking COVID-19 vaccinations for adults aged 75 or older. Appointments can be booked online through peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment or over the phone Monday through Sunday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. by calling 1-800-999-6488.

As of Wednesday, March 24, Caledon has seen a total of 2,611 cases of COVID-19, 2,484 of which are now marked as recovered.

Ahead of this week's Provincial Budget, the Ontario government is providing more than \$1.2 billion to public hospitals to “recover from financial pressures created and worsened by COVID-19.”

The investment was announced by Premier Doug Ford and Health Minister Christine Elliott on Monday.

\$696.6 million will be allocated to cover what the Province describes as “historic working funds deficits” with a focus on small, medium, as well as specialty and rehabilitation hospitals that are facing unique challenges. An additional \$572.3 million will be allocated across the board to ease hospitals' financial challenges related to direct costs and the loss of other forms of revenue, including co-payments for private rooms and the reduction of retail services.

“Hospitals have been at the centre of the pandemic from day one providing excellent care for our sick and vulnerable, and responding to the various outbreaks without hesitation,” said Premier Ford. “Clearly, this additional care comes at a cost, so as a government we must step up and support them. We need to ensure that our hospitals remain viable and are there for people long after COVID-19 has been beaten.”

Added Minister Elliott: “Ontario's hospitals have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic and our government is using every tool at our disposal to support them during these unprecedented times,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “This funding will ensure Ontario's hospitals can continue to provide high-quality care to all Ontarians as we work together to stop the spread of this virus.”