

Peel approaching milestones with vaccination efforts

"We know this is our shot," says Dr. Loh

By Rob Paul

With the Government of Ontario extending the provincial COVID-19 stay-at-home order until at least June 2, Peel continues to make waves in their vaccination campaign.

The Region has now administered 864,927 doses of the vaccine with 148,102 over the last recorded seven-day period (May 11 to 18) and 30,088 individuals have completed their vaccination.

That's over 100,000 more doses administered in Peel in the last week with nearly 25,000 more than the last seven-day period recorded (May 4 to 11).

Peel is beginning to approach milestone numbers with 47.1 per cent of resident having received a dose of the vaccine and 59 per cent of Peel adults (18-plus) having at least one dose.

With the continued uptick in COVID doses being administered, Peel has 105,404 total cases of COVID-19, a nearly 4,000 case increase since last week. 4,233 of the total cases are from Caledon—an increase of 102 since last week.

The death toll now sits at 747 in Peel, 18 of which are from Caledon—that's 14 more total deaths in the Region since last Tuesday, with three from Caledon.

As Peel continues to surpass vaccination goals, it has also expanded eligibility.

As of May 18, all individuals aged 16 or older who live, work or attend school in Peel, are eligible to book an appointment in Peel Region.

Bookings will be accepted for individuals who are 16 or older at the time of vaccination—Pfizer is currently the only vaccine authorized by Health Canada for use in this age group.

Individuals aged 16 to 17 must book an appointment online using the Region of Peel's booking system. If any individual needs help booking, call the Region of Peel COVID-19 Vaccination Line at 905-791-5202.

As per Ministry guidance, appointments will be available at all seven Peel Public Health mass vaccination clinics, as well as the mobile school clinics.

Appointments will also be available to book at a William Osler Health System Vaccine Clinic in Peel.

On Monday, the Province also announced that Public Health units may choose to provide vaccines to those aged 12 and over in clinics where the Pfizer vaccine is offered.

Further information for how Peel youth aged 12 to 15 can access COVID-19 vaccines is expected to be announced later this week.

As Peel continues to expand vaccination pop-up clinics, residents now have more options to support them in getting their COVID-19 vaccine. Different Peel vaccine pop-ups have opened at locations throughout the Region in recent days.

In addition to offering appointments, they will also offer the option to walk in without an appointment. These clinics are open to

anyone over the age of 18 who lives in Peel.

The three new pop-up clinics are all located in Brampton at St. Jean-Marie Vianney Catholic Elementary School, Castlebrooke Secondary School, and Fletcher's Meadow Secondary School?all are open from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

In an effort to increase vaccination numbers in the Region, on Saturday May 15 through Sunday May 16, Peel ran a ?Doses After Dark? 32-hour marathon clinic at the International Centre in Mississauga. The clinic ran from 12:30 p.m. on Saturday around the clock until 8:30 p.m. Sunday.

Over the 32 hours, healthcare workers and volunteers administered 4,939 doses of the vaccine, falling short of the 7,600-dose goal. But it was the first mass overnight vaccination clinic in Canada and offered a more convenient avenue for shift workers and those not able to reach a vaccination clinic during the day.

?We know that we have a ton of people in our Region who work odd hours, who work shift work, and for whom they have difficulty accessing vaccinations during daytime hours or bankers hours,? said Peel's Medical Officer of Health Dr. Lawrence Loh. ?So, we really wanted to be able to pilot an evening clinic late into the evening, and overnight hours just to track and see where the demand would land, and also at least provide that opportunity. We also know we have a young demographic in Peel and so, with younger people we also know that there's an attraction to spending time outside in the evening.

?It's a fun event, I was reflecting when I was driving, this is the first time I've actually left my house in the evening for a really long time. So, I imagine just, you know, trying to get to the younger folks who might be more inclined to come out in the evening, as well as for people who just wouldn't be able to get to a vaccine clinic during daytime hours. We know that this is our shot, we know that this is an opportunity to really turn the tale of the tape in Peel that has been so hard hit, and if we do this right, if we continue to push through together with everyone getting first shots, and then in the second shot we will hopefully get back to a life more ordinary. I think it's up to all of us, it's in our hands, or rather our arms, and we're going to make that difference.?

To find more details about vaccination clinics and to book a COVID-19 vaccine, visit peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine.