

Province rolls out COVID-19 vaccine to Toronto and Ottawa healthcare workers

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The Province has broken the record, after reporting more than 2,000 new COVID-19 cases for the first time on Tuesday since it all began earlier this year.

Ontario reported 2,275 on December 15, bringing a cumulative total of 144,396 cases across the province. 123,373 cases have been resolved and there have been 3,992 deaths.

Peel Region reported 586 new cases as of December 15 for a total of 32,228 cases since the start of the pandemic. 27,385 cases have been resolved, and 4,435 remain active with 408 deaths.

Numbers continue to rise in the regions that remain in the Grey-Lockdown level including 711 new cases in Toronto, 185 in Windsor-Essex and 154 in York Region.

Amid the increase of cases in the Province, Ontario has officially begun distributing the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer-BioNTech, through a Phase One approach on December 15.

The vaccine was approved by Health Canada on December 9.

Phase One included 2,500 health care workers receiving the vaccine in Toronto and Ottawa.

"We are ready to receive these vaccines as soon as they become available thanks to the excellent work of our health care officials and General Hillier and the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force," said Premier Doug Ford. "We have one of the most robust and comprehensive plans in the country and I am confident that all the necessary security measures and the advanced logistics systems are in place. The progress we are making is a welcome sign, but we must continue to be vigilant and follow the public health guidelines until vaccines are widely available."

The Province has stated that two pilot sites will take place at the University Health Network located in Toronto and the Ottawa Hospital where hospital and long-term care health workers will receive the vaccine.

14 hospitals within the Grey-Lockdown and Red-Control level regions are receiving the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

In early 2021, vaccines will be delivered to additional hospitals. The Province states that they anticipate more than 20 hospitals across the province will be administering the vaccine by the end of January.

"The launch of Ontario's three-phase vaccine implementation plan is a vital milestone in our ongoing work to keep Ontarians safe and overcome these unprecedented times," said Solicitor General and MPP Sylvia Jones. "This limited rollout in Toronto and Ottawa will allow us to test our process as we prepare for the increased availability of vaccines from the federal government."

Vaccination distribution has also begun in Quebec, where Gisele Levesque was the very first Canadian to receive the vaccine. Personal support worker Anita Quidangen was the first Ontarian to receive the vaccine.

"Keeping everyone safe is our top priority and this vaccine is Health Canada approved and ready to be administered," said Minister of Health Christine Elliott. "By vaccinating and protecting people who provide essential care in hospitals and long-term care homes, we will decrease the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in these settings."

?Thank you to our frontline heroes, volunteers, and to all the researchers who made this vaccine possible. As we continue to receive more doses, we will ensure that every person who wants a vaccine will receive one.?

For further information, please visit [Ontario.ca](#).