

Snags frustrate launch of Ontario's vaccination platform, but portal 'instrumental': Jones

By Brock Weir

Residents of Caledon looking to book their COVID-19 vaccinations online Monday following the launch of the Province's appointment system faced a few technical hurdles on the first day.

The Ontario government launched their portal for booking COVID-19 vaccinations on March 15.

Hours into the first day of the Ontario rollout, eligible vaccine recipients reporting long waits and technical glitches as they neared the application process.

Nevertheless, the Province said their booking system was 'critical' in supporting the next phase of Ontario's vaccine rollout.

'We are making steady progress in the execution of our vaccine distribution plan and the launching of the online booking system is another major milestone,' said Premier Doug Ford in a statement. 'In this phase of our plan, we are still offering vaccines to our most vulnerable, so I encourage everyone aged 80 and older to use the portal to book an appointment. For everyone else, please be patient; as we get more supply, the vaccine will be offered to more people.'

By visiting [Ontario.ca/bookvaccine](https://ontario.ca/bookvaccine), eligible residents can make an appointment themselves, or have a trusted individual make an appointment on their behalf. The website guides users through the process of making an appointment either through their portal or through their local Public Health Unit.

Individuals looking to book a shot will be asked for information from their green Ontario health card, along with their birth date, postal code, email address and/or phone number. Those Ontarians still using the old red and white health card will need to call the Provincial Vaccine Information Line at 1-800-999-6488 for next steps.

'The Provincial booking system will be critical in supporting the next phase of Ontario's vaccine rollout as more vaccines become available,' said Health Minister Christine Elliott. 'We know everyone is eager to receive the vaccine, and as we continue to build capacity, we are making it easier and more convenient for individuals to book and receive the vaccine as quickly as possible.'

The Province said, however, they were prepared for an anticipated surge in online traffic and encouraged everyone who is not yet eligible and not booking an appointment for an eligible individual to steer clear of the website to allow those due for theirs to book an appointment.

'With the launch of the new Provincial booking system and support number, we are reaching yet another milestone in our plan to vaccinate Ontarians as fast as we can and as soon as we receive the vaccines,' said Solicitor General and Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones. 'Our task force continues to work to bolster and adjust our vaccine rollout plan as shipments to Ontario continue to fluctuate. The portal and customer support number will prove instrumental through Phase 2 as we open mass vaccination sites and inoculate more Ontarians.'