

August 1, 2023

Dear Long-Term Care Home and Retirement Home Partners:

**RE: CHANGES TO THE COVID-19 VACCINE ORDERING AND PICK-UP PROCESS
EFFECTIVE AUGUST 29, 2023**

Following the World Health Organization's declaration of the end of the COVID-19 global health emergency in May 2023, York Region Public Health (YRPH) has shifted its COVID-19 operations from an emergency response model to one which focuses on sustained COVID-19 disease prevention, control, and management.

As part of the transition, COVID-19 vaccine distribution to YRPH health care partners will be merged into the existing processes for distributing all other publicly funded vaccines, including influenza vaccines. These well-established processes have been used to distribute publicly funded vaccines before and throughout the pandemic effectively, and the combined vaccine distribution process changes aim to allow greater operational flexibility in vaccine administration.

Starting **August 29, 2023**, the COVID-19 vaccine ordering and pick-up process will be as follows:

1. **Requests for COVID-19 vaccines must be made using the attached COVID-19 vaccine order form.** Each vaccine order form submission must be accompanied by a refrigerator temperature log including the most current five (5) days of temperature recordings. COVID-19 vaccine order forms submitted by the end of business day on Monday will be processed for shipment on Wednesday of the same week.
2. **COVID-19 vaccine orders will be processed as full vaccine vials.** Individual doses drawn into pre-filled syringes will no longer be supplied. Before submitting a COVID-19 vaccine order form, facilities should forecast the required vaccine doses and consider grouping vaccine administrations by scheduling designated clinic dates to minimize vaccine wastage.
3. **COVID-19 vaccine orders will be shipped to one of the five York Region sub-office pick-up locations of your choice.** COVID-19 vaccine orders will **no** longer be delivered to your facility. You will receive a telephone notification once your COVID-19 vaccine order is ready for pick-up. A [pre-conditioned, YRPH-validated cooler](#) between +2.0°C and +8.0°C will be required for pick-up and transport of the vaccines to your facility.
4. **Unpunctured COVID-19 vaccine vials must be stored between +2.0°C and +8.0°C until their discard date.** The discard date will be indicated on the vaccine order bag. Upon arrival

at your facility, transcribe the discard date from the label affixed to the vaccine order bag onto the vaccine box(es) or amber vial(s) and immediately place the vaccines in the refrigerator.

5. Vaccine ancillary supplies (i.e., needles, syringes, alcohol swabs) will be provided with COVID-19 vaccine orders while provincial supplies last.

The Ministry of Health requires all facilities that store publicly funded vaccines to have an annual cold chain maintenance inspection conducted by their local public health unit. Retirement homes that are interested in ordering and storing COVID-19 vaccines at their facility beyond August 29, 2023 and have **not** applied to participate in the 2023/2024 Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) should contact the Vaccine Inventory Program at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74033 to arrange for an inspection of their vaccine refrigerator as soon as possible.

Refer to the attached Frequently Asked Questions for further details on the new COVID-19 vaccine ordering and pick-up process.

York Region mobile vaccination teams will continue supporting on-site immunizations at facilities requiring COVID vaccination assistance in Fall 2023. Once details about the Fall booster campaign are received from the Ministry of Health, an information package will be distributed with updated resources and information on arranging clinics for fall doses in late Summer or early fall. Please contact COVID19vaccinecoordinator@york.ca or 1-877-464-9675 ext. 78092 for mobile vaccination team inquiries and clinic bookings.

For further assistance, please contact the Vaccine Inventory Program at vaccineinventory@york.ca or 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74033.

Thank you for your continued support in York Region's COVID-19 disease prevention and control efforts.

Sincerely,

Vaccine Inventory Program

Attachments:
COVID-19 Vaccine Order Form
Frequently Asked Questions