

Ontario Rollout of the COVID-19 Vaccine in Primary Care

Background/Context:

The Ontario government has expanded the delivery channels available to administer COVID-19 vaccines to include [pharmacies and primary care settings](#) that is part of Phase 2 of its vaccine rollout.

To ramp up capacity for vaccination, the province initially worked with primary care providers to administer the COVID-19 vaccines in collaboration with all 34 Public Health Units (PHUs) across Ontario. Primary care providers are contacting eligible Ontarians to arrange to be vaccinated. The type of vaccine provided to primary care providers can be anticipated to change over time and is impacted by vaccine availability and the decisions of government, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Public Health Units.

A [COVID-19 Immunization Toolkit](#) is available for primary care clinics to help plan for a COVID-19 Immunization Clinic. The Centre for Effective Practice has also developed a [useful toolkit](#) to help primary care practices identify patients who are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

The province has launched a website with instructions on how patients can [schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment](#) for themselves or for someone for whom they manage medical care and appointments. Eligibility is determined by postal code.

The Ontario government is vaccinating populations based on age and risk and availability of vaccine supplies. Vaccinations are offered to eligible populations at hospitals, mobile clinics and mass immunization clinics. Mass immunization clinics are a significant delivery channel to administer Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

It is important that primary care providers have access to their patients' vaccination information considering eligible patients may choose to receive their COVID-19 vaccination outside primary care settings at other locations offering vaccination clinics. It is mandatory for primary care physicians/clinicians and all other providers administering COVID-19 vaccines to enter vaccination information in an online vaccination management system called COVaxON. OntarioMD has been asked by the Ministry of Health to train participating primary care practices on COVaxON and to support practices to become comfortable with using it.

Frequently Asked Questions:

General

Q1: How is primary care involved in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines?

A1: The Ontario government expanded the delivery channels available to administer COVID-19 vaccines to include pharmacies and primary care settings in all 34 Public Health Units (PHUs) in Ontario. Primary care settings initially were involved in administering the AstraZeneca COVID-19/COVISHIELD vaccine to healthy Ontarians with informed consent. Primary care practices have now also begun to administer the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. It can be anticipated that the type of vaccine provided and to whom may change over time based on vaccine availability and the decisions of government, the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) and PHUs. As of May 18, anyone over the age of 18 can receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Q2: How do I bill for administering vaccine during this pilot?

A2: Effective March 6, 2021, temporary COVID-19 vaccine fee codes have been created for physicians administering the COVID-19 vaccine. G593: COVID-19 vaccine, \$13.00 and Q593: "sole visit premium COVID-19 PEM", \$5.60. For more information, please consult the [OHIP INFOBulletin # 210301](#) (March 2021).

The Ontario Medical Association (OMA) also has information for Members on [Temporary physician funding for COVID-19 vaccination services on a fee-for-service basis](#).

Q3: Our local PHU is determining vaccine eligibility for our residents. Can we participate in OntarioMD's COVaxON training and ask for support?

A3: OntarioMD (OMD) is committed to supporting primary care providers (family physicians and nurse practitioners) throughout Ontario in their adoption and use of digital health tools. This includes training and support for any clinician practices using COVaxON.

Preparing Your Practice

Q4: How can I identify my patients who are eligible to be vaccinated?

A4: Query your EMR to identify healthy patients who meet the province's age [requirements for receiving COVID-19 vaccines](#). If you need help with querying your EMR, please contact OntarioMD (OMD) at Support@ontariomd.com.

Q5: How do I let my patients know to come in and get the vaccine?

A5: If your practice has a website, you can publish a message on your website. You can also send your patients a mass email or mass text to tell them to book an appointment to come to your office to get screened and get the vaccine.

Q6: Can I check in or pre-screen my patients ahead of time?

A6: Please contact OntarioMD (OMD) at Support@ontariomd.com to discuss options for pre-screening your patients ahead of time.

Q7: Where can I find the pre-screening questionnaire?

A7: You can [download a copy](#) of the pre-screening questionnaire at OntarioMD.ca.

Q8: What other forms will my practice need?

A8: Several [useful forms](#) for running a COVID-19 vaccination clinic are available at OMD's website. You should have printed copies of the [COVID-19 Vaccine Screening and Consent Form](#) handy in case patients do not provide consent for COVaxON data collection, if the COVaxON tool is not available, or if you don't have an Internet connection. If this happens, you must revert to the paper form to collect the patient's vaccination data.

Q9: Is there a way to electronically report the administration of the vaccine?

A9: Yes, Ontario has launched COVaxON, an online vaccine management system built using Salesforce software. It allows you to capture the necessary data related to vaccination administration. While all vaccine sites will be required to enter administration data for every dose delivered into COVaxON, sites will be able to use alternative booking mechanisms, including their EMR system, as preferred.

Q10: Can I use a paper process instead of COVaxON?

A10: No, using COVaxON is mandatory, however a paper form is available as a backup.

Q11: Will my patients' data be in COVaxON?

A11: No, your patients must be added to the COVaxON system. However, if your patient has a Health Card Number, you will be able to access the Provincial Search Registry located within COVaxON via the patient's OHIP information and use the information there to populate your patient's record in COVaxON simplifying the entry process.

Accessing and Logging in / out of COVaxON

Q12: How do I sign up for COVaxON and get trained for it?

A12: PHUs or OntarioMD (OMD) are contacting primary care provider sites (family physician practices and nurse practitioner led clinics) and will introduce you to COVaxON. The PHU will provide you with OMD's contact information, Support@ontariomd.com, to help you get started with the onboarding process.

Each participating primary care provider and members of their staff who will be using COVaxON are required to sign a digital user agreement / Memorandum of Understanding to be onboarded to COVaxON. The Ontario Ministry of Health (MOH) has selected OntarioMD to assist in the onboarding and training of primary care providers. OMD can submit user information to MOH who will issue login credentials to primary care providers who will be administering COVID-19 vaccines. This will be done in collaboration with local public health units and OMD. Users will receive an email from Salesforce (support@jp.salesforce.com), the software used by COVaxON. Please check your Junk mail folder for the email in case you don't see it in your Inbox. **You will have 24 hours to log into COVaxON with your new credentials before they expire.**

OMD will conduct multiple orientation and training sessions using Microsoft Teams with primary care providers and staff who will be using COVaxON, perform a demonstration of COVaxON, go over workflow steps, and share training materials.

Q13: Where do I log in for the first time?

A13: You will receive an email from Salesforce (support@jp.salesforce.com) asking you to log in for the first time at <https://covaxon.my.salesforce.com/> with the username and password provided to set up your account. Please check your Junk mail folder for the email in case you don't see it in your Inbox. **You will have 24 hours to log in before the credentials expire.**

Q14: What do I do if my credentials expire or I have an issue logging into COVaxON?

A14: Please contact the Ministry's COVaxON ITS Support at (416) 327-3512 / Toll Free 1-866-272-2794 / covaxonsupport@ontario.ca for application-related issues, including enrolling new users, password reset, troubleshooting, and recording defects and other issues.

Q15: Where can I access the link to log into COVaxON? I have my account set up, but don't know where to log in.

A15: You can access COVaxON at <https://covaxon.my.salesforce.com>. Please access the site using the Chrome or Edge browser.

Q16: What is two step/factor authentication?

A16: Two-factor authentication is a security feature that adds a second layer of security to the user authentication process through approval on your mobile phone. You will need your mobile device and the Salesforce Authenticator app. Each user should have their own mobile device rather than share a device.

Q17: How do I log out of COVaxON?

A17: It is important that at the end of each use, and before exchanging devices with another user, that you log out of your COVaxON account. To log out, click the COVaxON icon in top right-hand corner of the screen and click "Logout". Go to Settings and clear your cache (i.e., the website and browsing history). **Remember your password and DO NOT save it on the Salesforce login page.** This will prevent other users from easily logging in.

Q18: What are the different types of user profiles within COVaxON and what do they have access to? (Please follow the guidelines provided by your Authorized Organization/PHU when requesting user profiles).

A18: See the chart below.

Core Profile Types with Defined Access to COVaxON

User Profile	Functionality Profile Has Access To	Reports/Dashboards Profile Has Access To
COVax Site Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search clients and update client information Check-in and check-out clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and export Vaccine Inventory Report, VE and AO Inventory Report, Summary Client Dose Admin Reports, and Clients with Highest Risk (28 Days) Report View AO site Dashboard, AO Scheduling Dashboards, and the associated linked reports
COVax Vaccinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search clients and update client information Check-in, vaccinate, and check-out clients Perform simplified clinical flow Read-only access for VE records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View AO Site Dashboard, AO Scheduling Dashboards, and the associated linked reports
COVax Clinic Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All vaccinator permissions Report inventory reconciliations at the VE level (wastage, extra doses from vial, no consent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View AO Site Dashboard, AO Scheduling Dashboards, and the associated linked reports
COVax PCP Vaccinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All vaccinator permissions Report inventory reconciliations at the VE level (wastage, extra doses from vial, no consent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View AO Site Dashboard, AO Scheduling Dashboards, and the associated linked reports

Q19: Is COVaxON integrated with certified EMRs?

A19: No, currently, the online portal and vaccination database, COVaxON, is not EMR-integrated.

OntarioMD (OMD) is working with MOH to integrate COVaxON with EMRs and to encourage administrators of all COVID-19 vaccines to ask patients to name their primary care provider. It is anticipated that EMR integration will be enabled through OMD's Health Report Manager (HRM®) tool in May 2021. This integration from COVaxON to EMRs via HRM will facilitate primary care access to up-to-date vaccination information about their patients regardless of where the patients were vaccinated.

Preparing Your Patients

Q20: Do I have to enter each patient's information manually?

A20: When using the OHIP provincial registry button to locate/add a patient in COVaxON, if the client is found using their Health Card Number (HCN) in this manner, the information pre-populates into COVAX for you.

Q21: What if a patient does not have a health card?

A21: If a patient does not have a health card, you can select "Alternative ID" and select another identification method such as a driver's license to identify the patient. It is expected however, that primary care practices are vaccinating their own patients and will know the identity of each patient. If a patient does not have a health card, the primary care provider cannot bill OHIP for the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Q22: What if a patient does not have an Alternative ID?

A22: A Health Card or Alternative ID are strongly recommended; however, they are not mandatory. If the patient does not have a piece of ID, you may leave the ID field blank. Please try to obtain as much information as you can such as the patient's date of birth or proof of address.

Q23: Can I update patient information after the initial check-in?

A23: Yes, you can update patient information after check-in.

Q24: How do I obtain informed consent from patients?

A24: All patients must provide consent after their primary care provider discusses current vaccine options and the timing of future vaccine options with them. The Ministry of Health has created a [COVID-19 Vaccine Consent Form](#) for primary care providers to complete to obtain consent from patients for the COVID-19 vaccination.

Vaccination Events

Q25: What is a vaccination event and who is responsible for setting it up?

A25: A vaccination event is a clinic, not a specific day and time the vaccinations are administered. Vaccination events should be set up by your local PHU.

Q26: Can our practice set up our own vaccination event?

A26: Your Authorized Organization, often a PHU, should be creating the vaccination event for your practice. You can learn more about vaccination events and their creation by attending an OntarioMD (OMD) End-to-End Training session or viewing a recording of a past session. The training schedule and recordings are available at [OntarioMD.ca](https://ontariomd.ca).

Q27: Can I offer a vaccination event if I'm a solo practitioner?

A27: There are several things to consider before determining if you should offer a vaccination event if you are a solo practitioner. For example, you will have to check patients in and out as well as administer the vaccine. Patients must also remain in your office for 15 minutes after receiving the vaccine to see if they have an adverse reaction. Your office must have a space for both patients who arrive for their vaccinations and those who must wait 15 minutes after their vaccinations where patients can maintain a 6-foot physical distance. You may wish to partner with other primary care providers to offer a vaccination event.

Q28: Can I vaccinate patients who are younger than the current age restrictions if they fall under another priority / high risk group?

A28: Yes, you can vaccinate patients who are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination if they are younger than the current recommended age, but fall under another priority or high risk group. You will have to select the reason for vaccination from the drop-down menu.

Q29: Is there a way to see how many doses our clinic will receive and when we will receive them?

A29: You will see the doses allocated to your Vaccination Event (location), but not the scheduled date of delivery.

Q30: If I work at multiple clinics, do I need an account for each event?

A30: If the event is in the same PHU, then you can use the same account. If you are working under different Authorized Organizations, then you would need an account for each one.

All COVaxON user accounts must be registered under an Authorized Organization (AO). For vaccinations in primary care settings, most users will require an account registered under their respective PHU, or in some areas, another organization chosen by your PHU such as a local hospital. If you have an existing COVaxON account registered under an AO other than a PHU or other designated AO, you will need to request a secondary account. If you are unsure of your AO, you can check with your PHU or contact OntarioMD (OMD) and we can assist you.

Q31: Can vaccination receipts be printed later?

A31: Yes, vaccination receipts can be printed at any time from within the patient record.

Q32: Will the patient get a copy of the vaccination receipt?

A32: If the patient consents to provide their email address, they can receive an electronic copy of their vaccination receipt. The receipts will come from the Ministry of Health via a no reply COVAX email address. If the patient does not consent to provide their email address, they can receive a printed paper copy.

Q33: Do patients have to provide their email addresses?

A33: No, patient email addresses are not required.

Q34: What happens if a patient goes to another COVID-19 vaccination clinic only four or five weeks after receiving the first dose of the vaccine?

A34: Appropriate dosing intervals can vary by vaccine and the health status of the patient. Physicians with questions on vaccines and dosing intervals should contact their Public Health Unit. The COVaxON system will indicate when the first dose of the vaccine was administered when you enter the patient's health card number, but will not prevent the early administration of the second dose. The primary care provider can determine if the second dose should be administered or advise the patient to wait until the appropriate dosing interval has passed.

Q35: Can COVaxON send patients a reminder of their second dose of the vaccine?

A35: COVaxON does not send an automatic notification or booking reminder of the second dose to patients. It is recommended that primary care providers book the second dose using their EMR (once the date/timing is confirmed) and then notify/confirm with the patient by phone.

Q36: What do I do if a patient doesn't show up for their vaccine appointment?

A36: Vaccine appointments are not booked through the COVaxON vaccine management system so you are not required to take any action in the system if a patient does not show up for their appointment.

Q37: How do I reconcile duplicate patient records in COVaxON?

A37: A Job Aid is available to explain how to reconcile duplicate patient records. Please contact OntarioMD (OMD) at Support@ontariomd.com to request this Job Aid.

Q38: How should I fill out the "Vaccine administered by" field in COVaxON?

A38: You can populate the “Vaccine administered by” field by searching for the provider who administered the vaccine to the client. When populating the “Provider” in the “Vaccine Administered By” field, users can select “Other Clinician, Other Designation, xxx” as a generic placeholder. This will trigger a second field to become available, “Vaccine Administered By (Other)”. The Vaccinator’s details should be entered here as: [First Name] [Last Name], [Designation OR Provider Role], [Professional License]. It is highly encouraged to reach out to your Site Lead who can submit a request to the ITS team for this provider to be created in the system. Please have the provider validated by your site lead and have the details in the table prepared prior to contacting your site lead.

About the Vaccine

Q39: Where can I get more information about the different vaccines?

A39: For more information about the different COVID-19 vaccines, please consult the product monographs on the [Government of Canada COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments Portal](#).

Q40: What is the recommended interval between the two doses of the vaccine?

A40: Please follow the clinical advice provided by the Ontario Public Health Unit by visiting <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/getting-covid-19-vaccine#which-vaccine-you-can-get>.

Q41: How do I report an adverse event after the administration of a COVID-19 vaccine?

A41: To report an adverse event hours after you administer the vaccine to a patient, please fill out the [Report of Adverse Event Following Immunization \(AEFI\) form](#) and submit it securely to your local PHU.

Note: If a patient experiences an adverse reaction while waiting the 15 minutes in your practice, you should record this in COVaxON by checking the Adverse Event field in the patient record at check-out. Whether or not the adverse event occurs within the 15 minutes or later, an AEFI form should be submitted to your PHU.

Support

Q42: Where can I get more information about the administration of the COVISHIELD, mRNA or other vaccines?

A42: The Ministry of Health website provides comprehensive information about COVID-19 vaccines. Please see the section on [General Immunization Documents for Immunizers and Vaccine Clinics](#). The Centre for Effective Practice has also compiled [resources for physicians](#) on their website that cover all aspects of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Q43: Where can I view recordings of the COVaxON training sessions?

A43: Please visit our [COVaxON training page](#) for information about training sessions and recordings of previous sessions.

Q44: Are there cheat sheets or quick reference materials available to help me after the training?

A44: Yes, role-specific Job Aids are available. They are helpful to reinforce what you will see during the training sessions. For example, the Inventory Manager Job Aid covers additional topics such as Recording Wastage, Adjusting Total Doses, etc. For a list of role-specific Job Aids, please visit our [COVaxON Training for Primary Care Practices page](#) on our website. To receive a copy of a Job Aid, please email

Support@ontariomd.com and include the name of the Job Aid(s) you wish to receive, and copies will be emailed to you.

Q45: Is support available for COVaxON if I need it?

A45: Yes, your clinic's IT support may be able to help. Additional support is available from OntarioMD (OMD) at Support@ontariomd.com, or from your local PHU or the Ministry of Health's COVaxON ITS Support.

OMD can help with onboarding to COVaxON, training, using COVaxON and general inquiries.

The Ministry of Health's COVaxON ITS Support can assist with access, passwords and address issues and defects with the COVaxON portal from 7:00am to 8:00pm, 7 days a week:

Phone: (416) 637-8672

Toll Free 1-888-333-0640

Email: COvaxonsupport@ontario.ca

Q46: How can I contact my local PHU?

A46: To find your local PHU and its contact information, please use the [Ministry of Health's PHU Locator](#). Enter your postal code or select your municipality from the drop-down menu. The name of the PHU and its phone number will appear on the next screen.