



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

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Re: Community Vaccination Update

Since the end of December, when the first COVID-19 vaccines were made available to First Nations communities, the journey to securing sufficient quantities of vaccine to support a whole community approach has continued with vigor. This approach was based on feedback from First Nations Chiefs and other leaders gathered by the First Nations Health Council, First Nations Health Directors Association, and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). We have continued to advocate to support this approach even in the face of vaccine shortages.

While limited vaccine hampered a whole community approach for a period of time, yesterday's provincial government announcement of extending the timeline to receive a second dose to four months provides us with an opportunity to access sufficient vaccine to fulfill a whole community approach for first doses, which will provide strong protection for more people much sooner. Extending the timeline to receive a second dose is based on emerging evidence that the high protection being seen three weeks after a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine lasts for at least four months. The province and FNHA will continue to monitor the science closely. Extending second doses gives us an opportunity to provide strong protection for more of the population much sooner, and FNHA supports this development.

While FNHA's focus on bringing vaccine to community has been a top priority, additional efforts to work alongside regional health authorities and the province to support culturally safe mass immunization clinics for relatives living in urban centres and away from home has continued. To this end, starting March 8th Indigenous people aged 65 and older will be able to contact their regional health authority to secure a vaccination appointment with these appointments beginning across the province on March 15th.

While the journey over these last few months has been challenging at times, we and our partners remain committed to whole community approach and the delivery of first doses to all First Nations communities by the end of March to support community immunity. However, at this time, we kindly remind you that public health measures must continue to be followed in order to stay safe, even after receiving the vaccine.

In health and wellness,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Jock'.

Richard Jock,
Chief Executive Officer