

## COVID-19 UPDATE

The College's top priority continues to be the health and safety of patients, the public and RDTs. The College strives to keep all RDTs informed with the latest information. The following are highlights since January 2021:

### Stay at Home Order

In early 2021, as COVID-19 cases continued to rise, the government of Ontario issued a stay-at-home order and declared a second state of emergency. The College posted the information and informed its registrants accordingly on January 13, 2021. Of the 532 registrants who received the communication from the College, 424 (80%) opened the communication.

### COVID Variants

The COVID-19 variants have been identified and are reported to be on the rise. An increase in the number of cases will put more strain on health care resources, lead to more hospitalizations, and potentially more deaths. To this end, the College reminded RDTs to follow enhanced precautions outlined in the [Return to Practice Guidance for RDTs](#) and [Infection Prevention and Control](#). Of the 532 registrants who received the communication from the College on January 15, 2021, 403 (76%) opened the communication.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Roll-out

The Government of Ontario started to roll out COVID-19 vaccinations in a [three-phase vaccine distribution plan](#) in early 2021. With Phase One of the plan underway, 34 local Public Health Units (PHUs) are rolling out their plans including vaccination of health care workers in a priority sequence, as identified by [Ontario's Ministry of Health](#).

Dentistry falls under the "Very High" priority group. Our understanding is that RDTs may fall under the "Very High" or "High" priority group depending on the Ministry of Health rationale and the decision of each PHU.

The model of vaccination delivery varies widely across the province depending on PHUs. Not all PHUs communicate their vaccination plans to the College and some of them have already changed their plans several times. To this end, most healthcare colleges may not have the most recent information from the PHUs. The College is working with its system partners including other healthcare Colleges, HPRO and the Ministry of Health to address this gap.

The College endeavours to update RDTs with the most recent information. Below are some highlights:

- College website is updated frequently and most recently on February 24, 2021.
- The College is taken a proactive approach to contact PHUs for updates.
- The College has contacted every RDTs through MailChimp to update their home and place of business information in the Member Portal.

- Forwarded information from Halton, Niagara, and York PHUs to our registrants in those regions based on the postal code or city/towns:

February 26, 2021

- Notice from Halton and Niagara PHUs regarding COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout sent to 47 registrants practising in those regions.

March 1, 2021

- Update from Niagara PHU sent to 34 registrants practising in the region.

March 4, 2021

- Notice from York PHU regarding COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout sent to 120 registrants practising or residing in the region. Seventy-two percent of recipients opened the message.
- On March 4<sup>th</sup>, 514 general registrants were provided with an update on the COVID-19 Vaccination Rollout for health care professionals via MailChimp. Seventy-six percent of recipients opened the message.
- All public and registrants' inquiries are answered by phone or email in a timely manner.
- All registrants have been provided with how to get up-to-date information from local public health units.

We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 status and vaccination roll-out and are committed to provide updates to RDTs as more information becomes available.