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Date : March 15, 2021 / Le 15 mars 2021

To/Dest. : Health care professionals, NBMS, NANB, NBPA, College of Pharmacists, RHAs (PH and clinical) / Professionnels de la santé, SMNB, AINB, APNB, Ordre des pharmaciens, Association des infirmières et infirmiers du Nouveau-Brunswick (SP et clinique)

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Subject/Objet : **Complex medical conditions – Information for specialist physicians and primary care providers / Problèmes de santé complexes – renseignements à l'intention des médecins spécialistes et des fournisseurs de soins de santé primaires**

As part of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout, patients aged 16 and over who are part of a defined list of complex medical conditions are eligible for early vaccination. Physicians, along with regional health authorities, specialty clinics, regional public health and vaccinators, can assist these patients by directing them to the online booking tool for RHA organized clinics, and identifying/assisting those that may need navigation support. Once the online scheduler goes live this week, appointments can be scheduled as early as the end of March. Certain specialty clinics, such as dialysis, may choose to offer a vaccination program directly through their clinics; if this is an option you wish to consider, please discuss and coordinate with your RHA.

There will be no formal requirement for patients to have an endorsement/approval from a health care professional. They will be asked to sign a statement attesting to the fact that they meet the eligibility criteria for early vaccine, and as such as based on an 'honor system', which is also being employed in other provinces and countries. The website does state that patients should be prepared to provide documentation, but the auditing will be minimal, and contact information for their physician or other primary care provider will suffice. Understanding that some people may 'jump the queue', it is the least complicated and labor intensive for all involved and ultimately allows us to get vaccine into arms as quickly as possible.

En vertu du plan de vaccination contre la COVID-19, les patients âgés de 16 ans et plus qui souffrent d'un problème de santé complexe figurant sur une liste définie sont admissibles à une vaccination précoce. Les médecins, régies régionales de la santé (RRS), cliniques spécialisées, services régionaux de santé publique et vaccinateurs peuvent aider ces patients en les aiguillant vers l'outil de prise de rendez-vous en ligne pour les cliniques de vaccination organisées par les RRS et en assistant ceux qui pourraient avoir besoin de soutien à la navigation. Une fois l'outil de planification mis en ligne la semaine prochaine, il sera possible de demander un rendez-vous dès la fin du mois de mars. Certaines cliniques spécialisées, comme les cliniques de dialyse, peuvent choisir d'offrir leur propre clinique de vaccination. Si cette possibilité vous intéresse, veuillez en discuter avec votre RRS et prendre les mesures de coordination nécessaires.

Les patients n'auront pas besoin d'obtenir une recommandation ou une approbation officielle d'un professionnel de la santé pour se faire vacciner. On leur demandera simplement de signer une déclaration attestant qu'ils répondent aux critères d'admissibilité à la vaccination précoce. Ce système basé sur le principe d'intégrité est utilisé ailleurs au Canada et dans le monde. Le site Web indique que les patients doivent être prêts à fournir certains documents, mais la surveillance sera minimale et les coordonnées de leur médecin ou de leur fournisseur de soins de santé primaires suffiront. Même si certaines personnes pourraient tenter de contourner l'ordre établi, cette solution reste la moins compliquée et la moins exigeante sur le plan de la main-d'œuvre, en plus de contribuer à vacciner la population le plus rapidement possible.

New Brunswickers aged **16 and over** with any of the following conditions as documented or diagnosed by their health care provider are eligible and prioritized for COVID-19 vaccine:

- people with specific cancers and/or undergoing:
 - active chemotherapy
 - radical radiotherapy for lung cancer
 - cancers of the blood and bone marrow including transplants
 - immunotherapy/antibody treatments
 - targeted cancer treatments (protein kinase or PARP inhibitors)
- people with severe combined immunodeficiency (SCID), homozygous sickle cell disease, AIDS
- people with significant problems with the spleen or splenectomy
- solid organ transplant recipients
- people on dialysis or with Stage-5 chronic kidney disease
- people with Down's syndrome
- pregnancy with two or more chronic medical conditions
- people with severe respiratory conditions, including:
 - pulmonary fibrosis
 - cystic fibrosis
 - interstitial lung disease
 - bronchiectasis
 - systemic steroids
- people with respiratory or neuromuscular conditions requiring respiratory support
 - ventilation
 - home oxygen

Health care professionals may also, based on clinical judgement and an assessment of patient needs, refer certain other patients for early COVID-19 vaccine on an as needed basis, including but not limited to:

- severe and profound intellectual/developmental disability
- severe mental illness (schizophrenia, Bipolar, Severe Functional impairment)

Les Néo-Brunswickois âgés de **16 ans et plus** qui souffrent de l'un des problèmes de santé suivants, tels qu'ils sont documentés ou diagnostiqués par leur fournisseur de soins de santé, sont admissibles au vaccin contre la COVID-19 en tant que membres d'un groupe prioritaire :

- les personnes atteintes de cancers particuliers ou qui subissent un traitement tel que :
 - une chimiothérapie active
 - une radiothérapie radicale pour un cancer du poumon
 - cancers du sang et de la moelle osseuse, y compris les greffes
 - immunothérapie/traitements à base d'anticorps
 - traitements ciblés contre le cancer (inhibiteurs de protéine kinase ou de PARP)
- les personnes atteintes d'immunodéficience combinée grave (IDCG), de drépanocytose ou du SIDA
- les personnes souffrant de problèmes importants de la rate ou ayant subi une splénectomie
- les personnes ayant reçu une greffe d'organe plein
- les personnes sous dialyse ou souffrant d'une maladie rénale chronique de stade 5
- les personnes atteintes du syndrome de Down;
- les personnes enceintes ayant au moins deux maladies chroniques;
- les personnes souffrant de maladies respiratoires graves, notamment :
 - la fibrose pulmonaire
 - la fibrose kystique
 - la maladie pulmonaire interstitielle
 - la bronchectasie
 - les stéroïdes systémiques
- les personnes souffrant de problèmes respiratoires ou neuromusculaires nécessitant une assistance respiratoire :
 - ventilation;
 - oxygène à domicile.

Les professionnels de la santé peuvent également, selon leur jugement clinique et une évaluation des besoins du patient, orienter certains autres patients vers la vaccination précoce contre la COVID-19, y compris, mais sans s'y limiter, les personnes qui souffrent de :

- troubles d'apprentissage graves et profonds;
- maladies mentales graves (schizophrénie, bipolaire, déficience fonctionnelle grave).

If you have identified a patient who falls in these categories, or have specific patients you feel warrant priority status, you may direct or assist them to register for vaccination in the complex medical conditions group.

The vaccine roll out plan is ambitious and looks to meet the needs of several vulnerable populations. Your assistance in communicating with patients regarding vaccine eligibility is invaluable in helping to reach as many New Brunswickers in as short a time as possible.

What primary care providers and specialists can do:

- Consider which of your patients fit the criteria for early vaccination and how you can assist them in self-identifying. You do not need to forward this information to the health authority.
- For a subset of patients with specific needs, consider asking your clinic staff to proactively reach out to them to ensure they are aware of how and when to book their appointment, or assist them with booking, if needed. Caregivers such as family members or guardians can also book on their behalf.
- Familiarize patients with information about the COVID-19 vaccines during clinic visits and consults. Let them know that you are recommending that they get the vaccine and explain why.
- You can find more information here
 - For general info about vaccines use: www.gnb.ca/COVID19vaccine
 - To access online booking use: www.gnb.ca/BookaVaccine
 - [Home - New Brunswick Medical Society \(nbms.nb.ca\)](http://Home - New Brunswick Medical Society (nbms.nb.ca) (members section).) (members section).

Si l'un de vos patients entre dans ces catégories, ou si vous avez des patients particuliers qui, selon vous, méritent un statut prioritaire, vous pouvez leur demander de s'inscrire à la vaccination comme membre du groupe des problèmes de santé complexes, ou les aider à le faire.

Le plan de vaccination du Nouveau-Brunswick est ambitieux et cherche à répondre aux besoins de plusieurs groupes vulnérables. Grâce à votre aide précieuse pour communiquer avec les patients admissibles à la vaccination, nous pourrions joindre le plus de Néo-Brunswickois possible, dans les meilleurs délais.

Voici ce que vous pouvez faire, en tant que fournisseurs de soins de santé primaires et spécialistes :

- Déterminez qui parmi vos patients est admissible à la vaccination précoce et comment vous pouvez les aider à s'y inscrire eux-mêmes. Vous n'avez pas besoin de transmettre ces renseignements aux autorités sanitaires.
- Demandez au personnel de votre clinique d'entrer en contact avec les patients ayant des besoins particuliers pour s'assurer qu'ils savent comment et quand prendre leur rendez-vous, ou les aider à le faire, au besoin. Les proches aidants, comme les membres de la famille ou les tuteurs, peuvent également prendre rendez-vous pour ces personnes.
- Renseignez vos patients sur les vaccins contre la COVID-19 lors de leurs rendez-vous avec vous. Faites-leur savoir que vous leur recommandez de se faire vacciner et expliquez-leur pourquoi.
- Pour en savoir plus :
 - Renseignements généraux sur les vaccins : <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/fr/corporate/promo/covid-19/vaccin-nb.html>.
 - Prise de rendez-vous en ligne : www.gnb.ca/BookaVaccine.
 - [Site Web de la Société médicale du Nouveau-Brunswick](#) (section pour les médecins).



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COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

1. **WHAT IS NEW WITH THIS VACCINATION PLAN?**

The biggest change is that our vaccine timetable has been moved up due to more vaccine supply from the federal government. Any New Brunswicker who wants a vaccine will be able to get a first dose by the end of June.

2. **WHO IS CURRENTLY ELIGIBLE TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT AND HOW DO WE BOOK IT?**

At this time, people aged 85 and older (including people who are turning 85 before the end of this year) are eligible to book an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine through a participating pharmacy. Over 200 pharmacies in New Brunswick will be participating.

3. **WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY GROUP IS NOT CURRENTLY LISTED AS ELIGIBLE TO BOOK AN APPOINTMENT?**

An announcement will be made when other priority groups and age groups are eligible to book an appointment for a vaccine. Until then, please remain patient: Don't call 811. Don't call your doctor, or nurse or pharmacist. Calling those professionals ties up resources.

4. **CAN I GET VACCINATED AFTER MY GROUP HAS PASSED?**

Once you become eligible, you are always eligible. If for some reason you are unable to get the vaccine at the time you first become eligible, you can book an appointment for it at any time thereafter.

5. **HAS THE 60-69 AGE GROUP BEEN MOVED UP IN THE VACCINE ROLLOUT PLAN?**

In the earlier version of the plan, students were prioritized based on two factors: initially the confirmed supply of vaccine from the federal government before the resumption of school in the fall was limited and greater transmissibility was being observed in young adults. Given that more vaccine supply has now been confirmed for New Brunswick, people between ages 60-69 will now be vaccinated in April-May. Individuals aged 16-24 will still be vaccinated in June.

6. **WHAT PROGRESS HAVE WE SEEN ON NEW BRUNSWICK'S VACCINATION PLAN SO FAR?**

In New Brunswick, we have focused on completing vaccination for every long-term care home, something we will accomplish by March 17. To date we have delivered vaccine to more than 560 locations in communities large and small across the province. Every dose listed as available on our dashboard is being assigned to clinics, including those being held through pharmacies and RHAs. With the announcement of the new sequencing plan and the involvement of pharmacies and RHAs, we will see major increases in the number of people being vaccinated.

7. **DO I NEED TO GO TO THE SAME PHARMACY FOR BOTH DOSES?**

No, but at the time you make your appointment for the first dose, you will be offered an appointment for your second dose, about 14 weeks later.



COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

8. **WILL EVERYONE GET VACCINATED AT A PHARMACY?**

Pharmacies are an important partner. Regional Health Authorities will also play an important role by holding immunization clinics for some priority groups and age groups.

The first immunization clinics held by Regional Health Authorities will be for identified priority groups that are not age-based. More information will be provided when bookings open for those groups.

Doctors who want to offer vaccinations at their offices are expected to play a larger role once more vaccines become available that have less stringent storage and handling requirements. The exact timing of this will depend on vaccine supply and availability, but likely will begin in late spring.

9. **WHAT GROUPS WILL BOOK AN APPOINTMENT NEXT AT A PHARMACY?**

Booking for these groups has not yet begun. Once those aged 85-plus have been offered the vaccine, we intend to proceed with the 80-plus age group followed by 75-plus. Workers who regularly travel across the border, including daily commuters, truckers and rotational workers will also be able to get vaccinated at a pharmacy.

10. **CAN SOMEONE BOOK AN APPOINTMENT FOR ME?**

Only one person should call to make an appointment for an eligible individual. Either the individual or appointed caregiver should contact the pharmacy to make an appointment. You may only make an appointment at one pharmacy, not multiple locations.

11. **CAN I GET VACCINATED AT MY DOCTOR'S OFFICE?**

Not at this time. In the immediate term, doctors will be assisting with clinics held by Regional Health Authorities.

12. **HOW WILL TRUCKERS, ROTATIONAL WORKERS AND REGULAR COMMUTERS PROVE THEIR ELIGIBILITY?**

Booking for this group has not yet begun. Once eligibility opens for them, truckers can use a Class 1 license to demonstrate eligibility. Regular commuters can use a letter from their employer or a copy of their multi-use travel registration. Rotational workers can use a letter from their employer.

13. **HOW WILL PEOPLE WITH COMPLEX MEDICAL CONDITIONS PROVE ELIGIBILITY?**

Booking for this group has not yet begun. The list of select complex medical conditions will be available online soon.



COVID-19 Vaccine Three or more chronic medical conditions (40-59)

Patients need three or more of the bolded list, the bullets are examples of specific diagnoses.

<p>Heart Disease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High blood pressure/hypertension (prescribed medication) • Heart attack/Angina • Congestive heart failure (fluid around the heart) • Cardiomyopathy (problems with the heart muscle) • Arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms) • Heart valve disease or surgery • Congenital heart disease • Any heart surgery
<p>Stroke</p>
<p>Chronic Neurologic Disease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dementia/Alzheimer's disease • Parkinson's disease • Huntington's disease • Ataxias • Cerebral palsy • Epilepsy/seizures • Spinal cord injury/paraplegia/quadruplegia • Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), myasthenia gravis • Guillain-Barre syndrome • Multiple sclerosis • Muscular dystrophy • Pervasive developmental disorder, severe brain injury
<p>Chronic Respiratory Disease *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease/chronic bronchitis/emphysema • Asthma (requiring regular use of medication/puffers) • Occupational lung diseases • Pulmonary hypertension <p>*Note that severe respiratory conditions such as cystic fibrosis, pulmonary fibrosis, interstitial lung disease, bronchiectasis, requiring systemic steroids, home ventilation/oxygen qualify for early vaccine regardless of the presence of other medical conditions</p>
<p>Diabetes Mellitus</p> <p>medication or insulin controlled</p>
<p>Chronic Kidney Disease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glomerular diseases • Polycystic kidney disease • stage 3- 5 chronic kidney disease <p>*Note that those on dialysis qualify for early vaccine regardless of the presence of other medical conditions)</p>
<p>Chronic Liver Disease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic viral hepatitis • Autoimmune hepatitis • Primary biliary cholangitis • Primary sclerosing cholangitis • Hemochromatosis • Wilson's disease • Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency • Liver fibrosis/cirrhosis
<p>Morbid Obesity – BMI 40 or more</p> <p>Body Mass Index (BMI) Calculator - Diabetes Canada</p>
<p>HIV infection</p> <p>On medication for same</p>
<p>On immunosuppression therapies (not dose-dependent)</p> <p>*Note that more severe immunocompromising conditions including chemotherapy, solid organ transplant, blood or bone marrow transplant, congenital immune deficiencies qualify for early vaccine regardless of the presence of other medical conditions</p>