

VACCINATIONS UPDATE

As members may be aware, the NS Department of Health's H1N1 vaccination roll out plans and procedures are being hampered by a significant shortage of available vaccine.

As of last Friday (October 30th), the Department of Health has revised its earlier mass vaccination clinics, opting access to only the groups deemed at the highest risk. This includes: pregnant women, children 6 months to five years of age, First Nations communities and front line health care workers.

Front line health care workers in this current environment are deemed only as:

- Healthcare workers in district health authority facilities
- Long-term care facilities
- Homecare agencies
- Family physicians
- Family practice nurses
- Pharmacists and Pharmacy technicians

While dentists and their clinical staff are ordinarily considered front line health care workers, **in this instance because of the short-term supply issues**, they are not deemed at high risk and are not included in the first wave of vaccinations. This decision is strongly influenced by the understanding that dental offices are doing triage with patient recalls and on-site checks which significantly reduces risk. We understand this decision has been made similarly across the Country.

Government is hopeful that vaccine supplies will return to reasonable levels within the next 10-14 days, at which time dentists and their staff are encouraged to attend Department of Health vaccination clinics in their area. Dentists may also consider arranging for private group vaccinations through the VON or like agencies, or contact their personal physician. Again, these avenues are not available until vaccine supplies are re-stocked.

As the H1N1 issue is changeable, the NSDA will continue to provide updates to members as necessary.

For the most recent information from the Department of Health, please visit <http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/h1n1/>