

February 25, 2021

To Chief Medical Officer of Regional Health Unit,

We are writing to obtain further clarity regarding the recent updates published by the Ontario Government to expand eligibility criteria for individuals during Phase I and Phase II of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

The Ontario Government now includes the following groups in its Phase I and Phase II Rollout Plan:

- All Indigenous adults
- Adult recipients of chronic home care
- Individuals with high-risk chronic conditions and their caregivers; and
- Other populations and communities facing barriers related to the determinants of health across Ontario who are at greater risk for COVID-19

While we interpret this as including high-risk individuals with disabilities living in the community, it is unclear how this plan will be operationalized to ensure that all individuals with disabilities are included and that accessibility is a paramount consideration in planning. Information available to date does not offer details of who is included within these groups, particularly “Adult Chronic Home Care Recipients” in Phase I and “Individuals with High Risk Chronic Conditions and their Caregivers” in Phase II.

These terms must encompass a broad range of services and supports that persons with disabilities rely on. A clearer understanding of who falls within these two categories is important for achieving equality, fairness, and for minimizing harm to these at-risk groups.

As the Ontario Government has indicated that decisions regarding local distribution of the vaccine will fall on regional health authorities, we stress the need to consult with persons with disabilities in conducting this work.

We hope to partner with you to discuss a vaccine rollout plan and request a meeting with our working group via Zoom; please let us know when would be most convenient for you. We look forward to working with you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stuart Howe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Stuart Howe
CEO
Spinal Cord Injury Ontario