

PARTNERING TO SUPPORT ONTARIO'S COVID-19 VACCINE ROLL-OUT



Ontario's universities, their students and researchers are playing a vital role in accelerating provincial vaccination efforts to ensure the health and safety of our communities and campuses.

Whether it's by supporting frontline workers, mitigating vaccine hesitancy, developing new methods of vaccine delivery or making the vaccine accessible to more Ontarians, the role and impact of universities can be traced across the province.

Many of Ontario's universities have also partnered with regional hospitals and public health units to leverage university buildings for pop-up clinics to accelerate the pace of provincial vaccinations.



Below are just some examples showcasing how Ontario's universities are partnering with communities to leverage resources and help ensure more Ontarians are vaccinated sooner.

● Accelerating vaccinations through student support

- In partnership with Niagara Region Public Health (NRPH) to support community vaccination efforts, health sciences students at **Brock University** helped design 11 regional vaccination clinics. Students worked with representatives from NRPH and other community stakeholders to design clinics that prioritize the health and safety of residents as they line up to get vaccinated.
- High vaccination rates play a critical role in bringing student life back to our campuses. To encourage students returning in the fall to get vaccinated, **Nipissing University** is providing students with the information they need to book a vaccination appointment. Through a COVID-19 webpage, students can learn more about how and where to book a vaccine appointment.
- With pressure on local health care workers, the Kingston Health Sciences Centre sent out a call for assistance in its vaccination clinics. More than 200 medical students from **Queen's University** responded to the call, supporting frontline workers in the region by screening patients, administering vaccines and monitoring patients for side effects following vaccination.

- Nearly 400 pharmacy students at the **University of Waterloo**, in various stages of their degree, stepped up to assist the provincial vaccine roll-out by becoming certified COVID-19 immunizers. With several students on placement or in part-time roles during the pandemic, they supported immunization efforts both within the Waterloo region and across the province based on their unique locations.

● Mitigating vaccine hesitancy by addressing disinformation and resource sharing

- Providing access to institutional and regional vaccination information for students, faculty and staff is essential to creating a safe campus this fall. Through a COVID-19 web page, **Algoma University** is ensuring students, faculty and staff stay informed on the latest vaccination information and community updates.
- To better understand vaccine hesitancy in Canada and what factors play a role in it, researchers at **Carleton University** conducted a public opinion survey. The survey results provided key demographic data around vaccine hesitancy and showed that visually strong and engaging public communications materials can help build trust with audiences and mitigate vaccine hesitancy.

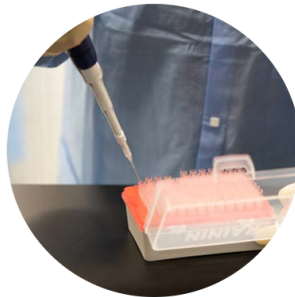
- While COVID-19 vaccination rates continue to increase, research shows there may be hesitancy if booster shots are required in the future. Researchers at the **University of Guelph** traced the history of vaccination programs in Canada and identified that by continuing to combat vaccine disinformation and ensuring widespread availability of vaccines, public health and government leaders can maintain an uptake in immunizations.
- For Toronto's at-risk populations, accessing accurate and easy-to-understand vaccine information can be challenging. **OCAD University's** Health Design Studio partnered with local physicians and organizations to design and launch the Button Project to mitigate vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccine confidence among residents visiting or working in shelters. The project features a button worn by health care workers with a scannable QR leading to a webpage with clear and simple answers to top COVID-19 vaccine questions.
- Addressing vaccine disinformation is critical to ensuring all Ontarians have the information they need to make an informed decision about getting vaccinated. The **University of Toronto** launched a three-part video series featuring health sciences experts to answer common questions around vaccine safety to encourage more residents to get vaccinated and reduce vaccine hesitancy.

● Increasing access to vaccines through leading edge research

- Offering an alternative to needle-based vaccines could reduce vaccine hesitancy for those who experience needle anxiety. Researchers at **McMaster University** are working with industry to develop a made-in-Canada dissolvable oral strip that can be infused with a COVID-19 vaccine. Once approved for public use, this new method of vaccine delivery would make it easier to store, transport and make the vaccine more accessible to Ontarians who have a fear of needles.
- Researchers at the **University of Ottawa** are leading a national quick response network to monitor the virus spread and detect new variants through wastewater screening in many major cities in Canada. This will enable the rapid assessment of both the immune response to the virus variants and whether these variants are resistant to existing vaccines. The findings will provide decision makers with guidance regarding drug therapy, vaccine effectiveness, and other public health strategies.
- A team of medical researchers at **Western University** are leading the way on COVID-19 vaccine development and access. Early on in the pandemic, the team was recognized as one of 50 to assist in the federal government's pandemic research funding call for their proposal to establish and test a COVID-19 vaccine and create a 'vaccine bank' that would contain ready-made supplies to be used at the start of another outbreak.



- Ensuring Ontarians have access to vaccines is essential to the health and safety of our communities. Researchers at the **University of Windsor** are helping Windsor-Essex residents access the COVID-19 vaccine through an easy-to-use smartphone app using a geographic information system. The app helps residents identify nearby pharmacies administering shots and provides critical data to public health experts to improve vaccine planning and implementation.



● Supporting community efforts through pop-up clinics

- Since opening an on-campus vaccination clinic in partnership with the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, **Lakehead University** has helped the hospital triple its daily number of administered doses.
- For students who have yet to get vaccinated, **Laurentian University** is partnering with Public Health Sudbury & District to host a campus pop-up clinic during the first week of September as part of the university's extensive health and safety measures for the fall.
- In an effort to increase accessibility to vaccines for those who live and work in high-priority areas in downtown Toronto, **Ryerson University** transformed its Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex into a pop-up clinic to offer first and second shots of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- In partnership with Durham Region and Durham Region Public Health, **Ontario Tech University** transformed the university's Campus Ice Centre into Oshawa's regional COVID-19 vaccination clinic location.
- Vaccinations are an essential factor to ensuring a safe return to campus this fall. To help increase student vaccination rates, **Trent University** and Peterborough Public Health held several pop-up clinics for students 18 years and older on-campus in the Trent Athletics Centre.
- Accessing vaccination clinics can be difficult for some residents. **Wilfrid Laurier University's** Brantford campus supported Brant County Health Unit and the community by creating space for two mass vaccination clinics on campus. Both spaces acted as the region's main vaccination sites and leveraged the university's access to public transportation.
- In partnership with Humber River Hospital, **York University's** Keele and Glendon campuses increased access to the vaccine by holding mass vaccination clinics for residents 12 years and older.



* Please note that some of the photographs featured in this document were taken prior to the Ontario Government's Social Distancing protocols coming into effect.