

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Wednesday, December 22, 2021**

**Health Unit Implements Additional Changes to Clinics and Process Given Surge in Cases**

The local health unit is making changes to its clinic schedules and processes in response to a recent surge in COVID-19 cases and direction from the province.

The provincial government recently expanded third dose eligibility. As of December 20, all residents 18+ became eligible to book a third dose appointment as long as it has been 84 days since their second dose.

To accommodate the jump in demand for vaccinations from local residents, the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit has made the following changes:

**Clinics:**

- a total of an additional 6,500 appointments have been added to health unit led clinics for the remainder of December.
- clinic space at the Cobourg Community Centre has been expanded to allow more people to be vaccinated.
- the Health Unit is working with its primary care partners to extend clinics at the Cobourg Community Centre from 6 to 9 pm starting Tuesday, December 21 until the end of December (excluding December 24, 25 and 26 and 31).
- additional clinics have been added to the LEX and CCC for the remainder of December. Beginning in January the LEX and CCC clinics will be running 7 days per week.
- additional clinics have also been added at the Haliburton Legion on December 23 and 30.

**Case and Contact Tracing:**

In order to move more staff to support the work at vaccination clinics, the Health Unit has had to redeploy staff to vaccination clinics. Effective immediately, the Health Unit will:

- provide a letter to confirmed COVID cases so they can notify their high-risk contacts (HRCs). The letter will contain details on isolation, Section 22 Class order and testing recommendations.
- no longer declare COVID outbreaks in community settings ( e.g. hockey team, restaurant). Outbreaks will continue to be declared in high-risk congregate settings including long-term care homes, retirement homes, shelters, group homes, schools, childcare centres, hospitals and other settings where there is a risk of ongoing exposure.
- no longer complete high-risk contact tracing follow-up, with the exception of those affiliated with a congregate/institutional outbreak or a high risk congregate setting. **Important to note:** household members of cases will be asked to self-isolate regardless of their vaccination status. HRCs who are not household members of a case and are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic do not need to isolate.

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“We are pleased to see so many of our residents seeking their first, second and third dose of vaccine for COVID-19,” says Dr. Natalie Bocking, Medical Officer of Health for the HKPR District Health Unit. “Some people may be experiencing challenges in getting an appointment and we want to assure them that we are doing everything we can to get the vaccine to as many people as possible throughout our region. This includes following provincial guidance on cast and contact tracing and moving as many of our staff as possible into clinics to provide vaccinations.”

Appointments for any of the Health Unit’s vaccination clinics **MUST** be booked through the provincial booking system ([covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine](https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine)). Residents can also call the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900 (TTY for people who are deaf, hearing-impaired or speech-impaired: 1-866-797-0007). People are encouraged to keep checking the provincial booking system as more appointments continue to be added.

People can also contact their local pharmacy or their primary care provider to see if vaccines are being provided. A list of mass immunization clinic locations and dates is available on the Health Unit’s website at [www.hkpr.on.ca](http://www.hkpr.on.ca).

Even when fully vaccinated, Dr. Bocking urges people to continue to follow public health recommendations: This means:

- Staying home if ill.
- Getting vaccinated and getting a booster dose once eligible.
- Continuing to keep a distance of more than six feet between yourself and others outside of household family members.
- Keeping holiday get togethers small and safe this season.
- Wearing a tightly fitting face mask when out in public, or you are unable to maintain a six feet distance from others when outdoors.
- Washing your hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water.
- Covering your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Dispose of the tissue and wash your hands.
- Following provincial gathering limits – a limit of 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors.

**For media inquiries, contact:**

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