



Nova Scotia
Physiotherapy
Association

NSPA Update - COVID-19 Vaccine

Over the last few weeks, the NSPA has received a number of inquiries regarding the timeline for non-hospital based physiotherapists to receive their COVID-19 vaccine. We can all appreciate the challenge faced by the Department of Health and Wellness (DOHW) when planning and implementing a mass vaccination plan. To identify and prioritize the risk profiles of the general population and the many unique sub-groups that fall within the general population, including health professionals, is a monumental task. While we can appreciate the complexity of this task, the NSPA shares the concerns and uncertainty of our members around when physiotherapists will receive their vaccine.

At this point, we do not have a definitive answer on the vaccine roll out plan, or when physiotherapists might receive their vaccine. However, we can share that the NSPA has been advocating for physiotherapists in all sectors, including private practice, long-term care, and community based physiotherapists throughout the pandemic, and we will continue to look for ways of contributing to the discussions. The NSPA has been running social media campaigns to highlight the role of the profession as essential healthcare providers in our province; connecting with and writing letters to the DOHW, Minister of Health, and Doctors NS; providing input and feedback directly to the DOHW on reopening guidelines; working to get access to funded PPE; and been in contact with local politicians.

The Chief Medical Officer and his team, to our understanding, have been focused on a principled and evidence-based approach to their vaccine rollout. At this time, the rollout is primarily an age-based community rollout instead of focusing on any one profession or group. While there have been a few situations where professions were prioritized, the age-based approach ensures that the vaccine is provided to the general population at the highest risk factor as quickly as possible. The CMO did confirm that regulated health professionals might be prioritized in the future; however, at this time the timeline is unclear. While the NSPA has been advocating on behalf of physiotherapists, there are many other health professions, as well as those in the hospitality, emergency services, and education sectors that are doing the same. The Office of the CMO shared that adding multiple professional groups would only slow the process down and patience is vital.

The NSPA is aware, along with the general public, that the government believes that all Nova Scotians will receive the first dose of their vaccine by the end of June. We are hopeful that this will be the case. The Office of the CMO has asked that we put trust in their process and their decision-making, which is based on sound evidence and related epidemiology. Throughout the NSPA's interactions with the Office of the CMO, the DOHW, and the Minister of Health's Team, they have expressed their appreciation of physiotherapist's role during the pandemic and importance in the health and wellness of Nova Scotians.

The NSPA will always continue to advocate on behalf of physiotherapists in Nova Scotia and keep our members informed.

Sincerely,
Stephen Richey
NSPA President

Patricia Connors
NSPA Executive Director