



Renfrew County and District Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

November 18, 2021

Dear Health Professionals,

Re: Third Dose Available for Health Professionals Six Months (168 Days) Post Second Dose

As most of you know, Ontario is now encouraging health professionals to get a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, when eligible.

This is not mandatory but is good advice and I am encouraging you all to take advantage of the opportunity.

We now know that antibody levels decrease over time, and while this is not a complete indication of our immune status, we are seeing concerning signs of another wave in several settings. Despite high vaccination rates, Europe is having major problems with both cases and hospitalizations to the point where lockdowns and other restrictions are now being put back in place. Similar disease counts are beginning to emerge in Canada and more locally in Ontario and Ottawa. Hence the need to do everything we can to keep the pandemic at bay.

As the days get shorter and colder, and we move inside more and more, we will have increasing challenges. We must do everything we can to protect ourselves and others, and to get through this winter successfully.

With approximately 20% of the general population still unvaccinated, roughly a 50-50 split between hesitant adults and ineligible children, there is ample opportunity for the virus to take hold. As a result, we are now seeing more breakthrough infections. The best prevention is more vaccination, two doses for the eligible who are unvaccinated and a third dose for specific groups including health professionals.

Our track record is strong. Over 89% of those who are eligible for vaccination have now received a first dose, and 86% have received a second dose. Furthermore, we

anticipate Health Canada's approval of the vaccine for the 5 to 11 year old age group, and this too will have a major impact on reducing the number of unvaccinated people in Renfrew County and District.

Health professionals have provided tireless leadership, both in their key service roles and by providing an example for our community to follow. I cannot thank you enough. I remind myself daily that intersectoral collaboration and your dedication is why we have such an impressive track record to date. Nonetheless, we cannot let down our guard this winter and I encourage you all to take advantage of the booster dose that is now available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'RAG', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Dr. Robert Cushman
Acting Medical Officer of Health
Renfrew County and District Health Unit