

South Algonquin vaccine rollout changes quickly on a daily basis

By Mike Riley

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According to the Renfrew County District Health Unit's website as of May 18, those now eligible to book for the COVID-19 vaccine have been updated to include; those aged 18 years or older, those with at-risk health conditions and those who cannot work from home. More details can be found at www.rcdhu.com. Jim Etmanski, the executive director of the South Algonquin Family Health Team, also gives an update on the vaccine rollout in South Algonquin Township.

On the RCDHU's website as of May 18, the eligibility for those people who can now book a vaccination appointment is as follows; those aged 18 years of age or older, those with at-risk health conditions like immune deficiencies and autoimmune disorders, stroke and cerebrovascular disease, dementia, diabetes, liver disease, all other cancers, respiratory diseases, such as asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, pleurisy, spleen problems, such as asplenia, heart disease, hypertension with end organ damage, diagnosed mental disorder, substance use disorders, sickle cell disease, thalassemia, immunocompromising health conditions, and other disabilities requiring direct support care in the community.

The RCDHU also stipulates a second grouping of people who cannot work from home who can book the vaccine, including; essential and critical retail workers, workers in manufacturing industries directly involved in supporting the COVID-19 response, construction and other essential businesses and services where facilities are at increased risk for COVID-19 outbreaks and spread, social workers and social services staff, courts and justice system workers, transportation, warehousing and distribution workers, electrical workers, communications infrastructure workers, water and wastewater management workers, financial services workers, veterinarians and their staff, waste management workers, oil and petroleum workers, natural gas and propane gas workers, mine workers and uranium processing workers. More details for eligibility can be found at the RCDHU website at www.rcdhu.com

Etmanski says things have been changing very quickly up in South Algonquin and there continues to be several mass immunization clinics each week throughout Renfrew County. He says that in Whitney, their pharmacy has paused the delivery of the AstraZeneca vaccine as per provincial guidelines.

?We will be rolling out our next clinic at the Family Health Team office here at the Whitney Medical Centre tentatively next Thursday, May 27. We will be offering the Moderna vaccine to anyone 18 years of age and up as per the latest provincial eligibility update. We will only have a limited supply for this date, 105 doses, but we hope that our health unit can secure more vaccine for us in the coming days and weeks,? he says. ?I imagine much of the available vaccine is being directed to the hotspots elsewhere in the province right now.?