

Youth aged 12 to 17 now eligible for second dose of COVID-19 vaccine

By Nate Smelle

By the time Bancroft This Week went to press on the afternoon of July 6, the global death toll registered at 3,986,902; and, the number of confirmed cases had surpassed 184-million. In Canada, COVID-19 has taken the lives of 26,368 of the 1.42-million+ people who have contracted the coronavirus. It was also reported on Monday, July 5 that the provincial case count rose by another 170 new cases of COVID-19. One day later, the province announced that nine more people had also been added to the provincial death toll, which currently stands at 9,224. Locally, Hastings and Prince Edward Public Health has documented another two new cases of COVID-19 to add to its total of 1,132 throughout the region. Since the beginning of the pandemic in January 2020, 11 people have died from COVID-19 between the two counties. According to the health unit's website, there are currently four active cases. As COVID-19 vaccination programs are being rolled out throughout Canada and around the world, the case count and death toll continue to trend downward. As Ontarians strive to move beyond Step-2 and into the final step on the Roadmap to Reopen, the province recently expanded its vaccination program. Starting on Monday, July 5, all children and youth between the ages of 12 and 17 across Ontario became eligible to book an accelerated second dose appointment to receive the Pfizer vaccine. The government also indicated that these appointments can be scheduled: through the provincial booking system; directly through public health units that use their own booking system; and, through participating pharmacies. "Expanding the eligibility for accelerated second doses to include youth aged 12 to 17 is another positive step in the rollout of vaccines across Ontario," said Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. "With the continued support of our public health partners, we are on track to significantly increase the number of Ontarians who will be fully immunized this summer, helping to protect themselves and their community." During the month of June, Ontario received approximately 3.7 million doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, and approximately 4.7 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine. In July, the province expects to receive approximately 550,000 doses of Moderna within the first week; and, approximately 3.54 million doses of Pfizer before the end of the month. Those who are eligible to receive the vaccine are encouraged to book online at: www.ontario.ca/bookvaccine. Individuals unable to book online are advised to contact the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at: 1-888-999-6488. The booking line is available seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Those who do not have a photo ID health card will be required to book by phone. For more information about how to reduce the spread of COVID-19, visit: www.hpePublicHealth.ca. Non-medical emergencies, outbreaks or a reportable disease that require immediate assistance can be reported by calling: 613-966-5500/1-800-267-2803 and following the prompts.