

PRIORITIZATION OF CANADIANS WITH LUNG DISEASE IN COVID-19 VACCINATION ROLLOUT

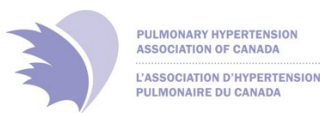
A Joint Statement

January 25, 2021

The COVID-19 Respiratory Roundtable represent and work closely with Canadians living with lung disease. We are reaching out to you to share our collective concerns about the prioritization of these vulnerable individuals in the rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. From Canadians living with a lung disease such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis, lung cancer, pulmonary fibrosis, pulmonary hypertension, and pre- and post-lung transplant, there is widespread concern among these patients regarding when in the vaccine rollout in the provinces and territories they will have the opportunity to receive the vaccine.

As you know, SARS-CoV-2 is a novel virus and the long-term consequences post-infection remain unknown. As one example, there is emerging evidence which demonstrates that patients living with interstitial lung diseases and with pulmonary fibrosis are among the high risk populations who are most vulnerable from the pandemic. Recent research shows that these individuals are 60 per cent more likely to die if hospitalized with COVID-19 than others. Given the heavy health burden that Canadians living with these conditions and their caregivers already face, which has been exacerbated throughout the pandemic, we believe it necessary that they be sheltered from any additional risks caused by a SARS-CoV-2 infection and given priority in the rollout of COVID-19 vaccination programs. Vulnerable groups with pre-existing conditions like these deserve early protection. We are looking for you to confirm and provide clarity at the earliest opportunity on when patients impacted by these conditions can expect to receive their vaccination for COVID-19.

We therefore urge the federal, provincial and territorial governments to prioritize people living with lung disease who are at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 complications in the vaccination rollout. Prioritizing eligible Canadians in your vaccination rollout plans will protect both the vulnerable patients living with these conditions and healthcare professionals who are working to protect and provide high quality care to these patients throughout the pandemic.



About the COVID-19 Respiratory Roundtable:

Since the onset of the pandemic, the Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) has developed numerous position statements to provide clinical guidance for health care professionals (www.cts-sct.ca/covid-19). In April 2020, the CTS convened a pan-Canadian COVID-19 Respiratory Roundtable of professional societies and patient organizations which meets on a bi-weekly basis to exchange information on pandemic-related activities and strategies, align messaging and identify opportunities for collaboration. Members disseminate CTS guidance to their professional constituents and translate these guidelines into public and patient education materials and programs. This has allowed health care professionals and patients to access the most up to date evidence-based information and medical expertise on issues impacting their lung health.