

Hospital union leaders call urgently on Ford government to vaccinate long-term care homes in Hamilton region

Hamilton (On.) – Left off of the province’s priority list for vaccination despite having 16 long-term care homes in outbreak, Hamilton hospital union leaders today called on the provincial government to include the region as a priority area.

The provincial government has announced that all residents, health care workers and essential caregivers at long-term care facilities in the priority regions of Toronto, Peel, York and Windsor-Essex will be vaccinated against covid-19 by January 21, 2021. Hamilton is the only grey zone left out of the accelerated plan.

“193 seniors have died in outbreaks in long-term care homes in our community,” says Dave Murphy, president of CUPE local 7800 which represents 4,000 staff at Hamilton Health Sciences. “16 long-term care homes are in outbreak and some of these are raging out of control. Unless we begin to vaccinate long-term care residents, staff and essential visitors in Hamilton on an urgent basis we will face the exponential growth of this virus inside these institutions, with all of the needless suffering and death that brings with it. Our hospitals are already strained and working well over capacity and the government’s refusal to vaccinate in long term care in Hamilton on a priority basis puts access to hospital care at risk.”

“The provincial government announced that all residents, health care workers and essential caregivers at long-term care homes in the priority regions of Toronto, Peel, York and Windsor-Essex will receive a COVID-19 vaccination by January 21, 2021. Hamilton is the only grey zone left out of the accelerated plan”, said Santo Cimino, president of CUPE local 786, which represents 1,500 staff at St. Joseph’s Hospital. “There are 100,000 doses of the vaccines available in freezers which could be used to protect our community. We are asking the government to deploy them immediately.”

Area MPPs and many others have called for the region’s long-term care residents, staff and essential visitors in Hamilton to be vaccinated on a priority basis.

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