



General Rick Hillier, Chair
COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Taskforce
Ministry of the Solicitor General
George Drew Bldg 18th Flr,
25 Grosvenor St, Toronto, ON M7A 1Y6
By email: **Rick.Hillier@ontario.ca**

December 8, 2020

Subject: Ensuring Ontario nonprofits are included in COVID-19 Vaccination Roll-Out

Dear General Hillier:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), we would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Ministers' COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force. We would also like to share perspectives from Ontario's nonprofit sector about prioritized access to the COVID-19 vaccine.

The ONN is the independent network for the 58,000 nonprofits in Ontario, focused on policy, advocacy and services to strengthen Ontario's nonprofit sector as a key pillar of our society and economy. The nonprofit sector contributes \$50 billion to Ontario's GDP. Nonprofits employ over one million workers of which 80 per cent are women. Nonprofits are here and ready to support their communities. But to be there for their communities, frontline nonprofits will need early access to the vaccine for their workers and clients.

The ONN is in regular contact with our network about challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and related economic shutdown. Nonprofits' access to COVID-related support has been a major issue throughout the duration of the pandemic. In our April COVID-19 Flash survey,¹ ONN found that nonprofits were having persistent difficulty accessing personal protective equipment (PPE).² Many nonprofits across sectors have been designated as essential services, from daycares to long-term care homes, shelters to food banks, who do not have the ability to shutdown during government mandated lockdowns and are often involved in serving vulnerable populations, who are experiencing higher COVID-19 rates.

¹ Ontario Nonprofit Network. "COVID-19 Flash Survey Findings: April 2020"
<https://theonncanada.ca/our-work/covid-survey-april-2020/>

² Ontario Nonprofit Network. "The state of the Ontario nonprofit sector three months into the COVID-19 crisis." <https://theonncanada.ca/our-work/covid-survey-2020/#1597158039223-89c7a16f-fcbe>

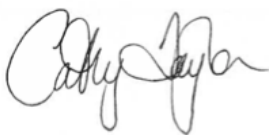
There is no question that long-term care home residents and workers, healthcare workers, and Indigenous communities should be at the top of the vaccine priority list, as your task force has [determined](#). We would strongly urge you to prioritize nonprofit settings for vaccine distribution once the first tier of priority groups has been vaccinated.

We recommend that essential and frontline nonprofit workers and their vulnerable clients, as well as those that serve racialized and low-income communities that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic are prioritized next in vaccination distribution by the Task Force and Government. This means ensuring that nonprofit workers across the sector, from disability and mental health services to food banks and congregate care settings are receiving access to the vaccine as soon as possible.

Ontario's nonprofits and charities have been on the frontlines supporting and serving communities during this unpredictable and tumultuous time. They are the frontline infrastructure, rooted in communities across Ontario and can reach people where they are. Nonprofits can also help with access to hard to reach populations and, as a trusted source of information for communities, can assist with ensuring that populations are engaged and aware of the steps needed to access the vaccine. The Government needs to work in partnership with the nonprofit sector to ensure communities made vulnerable by the pandemic are not left out in the cold.

We look forward to meeting with you or your representatives at your earliest opportunity to discuss these recommendations and how Ontario's nonprofit sector can be a part of the government's vaccination roll-out plan to address COVID-19.

Sincerely,



Cathy Taylor
Executive Director
Ontario Nonprofit Network

Cc:

The Honourable Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General of Ontario
The Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health
The Honourable Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario
Shelley Gibson, Assistant Deputy Minister, COVID-19 Vaccine Planning and Implementation Division