

## **Pembroke Regional Hospital Begins Distribution Of COVID-19 Vaccine With Targeted Clinics For Prioritized Groups In The Region**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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PEMBROKE – The mood was upbeat and rounds of applause erupted as staff from Marianhill became the first people to receive a dose of Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine Wednesday morning at the Pembroke Regional Hospital’s first vaccination clinic.

A collaborative effort between PRH, the long-term care home and the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, Wednesday’s clinic for Marianhill staff was the first of a number of scheduled clinics for groups in the hospital’s catchment area who have been prioritized to receive the vaccine at this stage of the vaccine rollout. This includes long-term care staff, essential caregivers for long-term care residents, priority retirement homes and health care workers.

“This week’s launch of our clinics was a momentous milestone for all involved,” said PRH President and CEO Pierre Noel. “The arrival of the vaccine offers hope to everyone that the spread of the virus can be controlled and that we are that much closer to returning to some sense of life as we knew it.”

Mr. Noel described the clinics as a “well-oiled machine” and credited the work of all involved for making this happen.

Marianhill CEO Linda Tracey acknowledged the contributions of the long-term care home’s Medical Director Dr. Bruce Strader, Nurse Practitioner Jean Benton, Dr. Brian Baxter and Unit Manager Christine Rossi who partnered with the team from PRH to give the first dose of the vaccine to approximately 170 staff. “We continue to benefit from the close healthcare community we are a part of. Working with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit and the Pembroke Regional Hospital has ensured that we can continue to provide safe quality care to our residents and staff. We are blessed to have this support.”

Staff from Miramichi Lodge received their dose of the vaccine on Thursday evening, with many taking photos of their experience and expressing gratitude to all involved for making the vaccine available.

“Miramichi Lodge has long worked collaboratively with the Pembroke Regional Hospital and we are very appreciative that they offered to lead our staff and essential caregiver vaccine clinics,” said Shelley Sheedy, Director of Long-Term Care for Miramichi Lodge and Bonnechere Manor, noting that staff appreciated the user-friendly booking system and were very impressed with the clinic experience itself. “The PRH clinic will provide a good template for others,” she said.

Sabine Mersmann, Senior Vice-President of Clinical and Support Services – Partnerships and Integration at PRH described preparation for the launch of the clinics as an “all hands on deck” collaborative effort involving many throughout the organization and beyond.

“Being able to host these clinics for our healthcare partners, our own staff, and eventually, for the public means a lot to those who have been working very hard behind-the-scenes in order to ensure everything flows smoothly and is being addressed,” Ms. Mersmann said.

“Every aspect of clinic operation has been reviewed and thought through and we are so thankful to be working with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit, many of our local physicians who have provided fantastic support, the County of Renfrew Paramedic Service, the Pembroke Fire Department, community volunteers, PRH retirees, many of our current staff and management team, and many others in our health care community who have stepped up to provide assistance. Together, we are all working to fill the roles that are needed to make this a success,” she said.

Dr. Rob Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health for the Renfrew County and District Health Unit said vaccine shipments are now arriving quickly in the region.

“PRH has been in the forefront and is now actively vaccinating long-term care staff and essential caregivers before moving on to healthcare workers at risk,” Dr. Cushman said.

“The healthcare sector has pulled together like never before for priority number one, to control the pandemic by vaccinating as many residents as quickly as possible. The commitment and the enthusiasm are unparalleled. On behalf of the general public, I want to thank all those involved.”

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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