

**Head Office**

Swan Lake First Nation 200-200 Alpine Way, Headingley, Manitoba R4H 0B7

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**Winnipeg Sub-Office**

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## **First Nations Vaccine Implementation Task Force Integrated Vaccine Operation Centre Rollout for Manitoba First Nations**

*First Nation Vaccine Rollout: Overview*

**March 17, 2021**

The **First Nations Vaccination Implementation Task Force (VITF)** is pleased to share that 100,000 doses will be administered in all Manitoba First Nations and adjacent Northern Affairs communities in the next 100 days, an ambitious goal that will require unprecedented partnership and an ‘all hands on deck’ effort.

The ramping up of our collaborative COVID-19 vaccination efforts and the integrated response to the health needs and priorities of First Nation peoples continues to be a top priority for our leadership and health experts.

Members of the First Nations VITF, including Southern Chiefs’ Organization, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, among others, have coordinated an operational structure known as the **Integrated Vaccine Operation Centre (IVOC)**. This First Nation-led team is working in collaboration with numerous partners and stakeholders, including Ongomiizwin Health Services and Indigenous Services Canada’s First Nations and Inuit Health Branch and the Canadian Red Cross, to plan and facilitate the rollout of vaccines to First Nations into the second quarter of 2021 (April to June).

*Logistics: Doses and Allocations*

Grand Chief Jerry Daniels and other First Nation leadership and health experts have worked diligently to ensure all First Nations are prioritized with confirmed vaccine commitments. In March, the province of Manitoba committed to 40,500 doses of the Moderna vaccine for First Nation partners, with an additional 10,000 doses arriving in April to complete all first doses. With this current plan, First Nation citizens should be fully vaccinated with first and second doses before the end of June.

Each First Nation has been allocated doses to match 75 per cent of the adult population aged 18 and older. This number is based on predicted uptake numbers based on actual uptake during the first phase of immunization in First Nations in January and February. If additional doses are required, more can be ordered for your community.

IVOC is also putting together high efficiency models for pop up clinics and vaccination sites are worth considering for larger communities. These models will be shared with you.

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## *Logistics: Distribution and Sequencing*

The **34 SCO**-member Nations will receive their vaccine doses no later than **the week of April 12**. Second doses will be delivered as close as possible to 28 days after the first dose shipment.

As shared in our SCO Vaccine Update on March 5, different variables have been examined by IVOC to schedule vaccine shipments to each First Nation. This includes key emergency hazards that may impact communities and result in public health vulnerability and/or emergency evacuation. The variables listed below are considered in the sequencing and indexing process regarding vaccine shipments to communities:

- Risk of flooding
- Risk of losing winter road/ferry only access
- Risk of fire
- COVID-19 fatality rate (four or more)
- Pandemic fatigue
- Population size – largest to smallest

## *Immunization Site Prep: Is your community ready?*

Members of IVOC will be in touch to help with logistical planning for your community's immunization program and to prepare for your vaccine shipments, surge support, and supplies for your vaccination clinic as needed, including:

- Staffing (greeters, vaccinators, security, administrative support, drivers, housekeeping, etc.)
- Volunteer support
- Site set up (tables, chairs, and signage)
- Medical supplies and PPE
- Communications materials

Surge support for vaccinators and other clinic personnel is available.

Some communities have also begun preparing vaccination consent forms in advance, which is a step worth considering to help prepare your community for immunization.

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*Communications*

We welcome First Nation leadership and Health Directors to contact SCO directly to let us know if you need communication materials. We have created the following and can adapt them for your specific community:

- Posters
- Social media posts with supporting content
- One-pager Fact sheets
- Flyers
- Radio PSA scripts for your community radio station

We invite you to connect with us at: [media@scoinc.mb.ca](mailto:media@scoinc.mb.ca)

Below is some messaging you can use if you receive media requests:

- First Nations across Manitoba are working together with our Treaty partners to get 100,000 doses in the arms of First Nation citizens in 100 days!
- Vaccination in First Nations is proceeding effectively and quickly due to First Nations taking a self-determined approach to our health.
- There are many systemic factors and social determinants related to colonialism. First Nation leaders and health experts in Manitoba have been united in calling on the province and the federal government to prioritize First Nations for vaccination due to increased risk during the COVID-19 pandemic – and we are truly seeing how our collaborative efforts and advocacy is producing fast results!

*Background Statistics*

As of March 16, 2021, there were 10,638 recorded cases of COVID-19 among First Nation people in Manitoba, 32 per cent of all cases in the province. First Nation people represent 69 per cent of all active cases, 41 per cent of current hospitalizations, and 50 per cent of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) patients in Manitoba. The median age of death for First Nation people in Manitoba is 66 years of age, compared to the median age of 83 overall for Manitoba.