



Canadian
Down Syndrome
Society

Société
canadienne de la
trisomie 21

Dear Minister Hajdu,

January 5, 2021

I write on behalf of Canadians with Down syndrome.

Rapid decisions are being made as the medical sector continues to learn more about Covid-19. We applaud the efforts of those decision makers who are leading both the acquisition plans and rollout plans of the inventory of available vaccines.

Research took place during 2020 involving Individuals with Down syndrome. Of particular interest is the T21RS Covid-19 initiative lead by UK scientists with contributions from international stakeholders. It was previously known that individuals with Down syndrome can manifest the high-risk medical conditions of the aged during the fourth decade of their life, seen in the typical population during the eighth decade of life:

[T21RS COVID & DS Survey](#) and [Down Syndrome Medical Interest Group-USA](#)

We have reviewed the recommendations for vaccine delivery prioritization in the following Canadian National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) document:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/guidance-prioritization-initial-doses-covid-19-vaccines.html>

Internationally, there have been very recent changes made to vaccine allocation prioritization. As you know, the U.S. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) announced that Phase 1a of their vaccine allocation framework includes health care personnel and all persons who reside in long term care facilities. Phase 1b, gives access priority to all persons over age 75 and non-health care frontline essential workers. Then, on Dec. 20, further updates were made to Phase 1c assigning priority to include all persons aged 65-74 **and** reflecting recent data supporting increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19, **to include any adult person (age 16-64) with Down syndrome:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>

This decision has also recently been adopted by Chief Medical Officers of the UK:

[UK Advice on Priority Groups December 30,2020](#)

Data supports that adults with Down syndrome over age 40 should be included with the recommendations for all adults of advanced age and now that individuals with any high risk for severe illness, including those with Down syndrome, age 16-64 be prioritized. To date, other than allergy, no contra-indication to administering the vaccine to individuals with Down syndrome has been reported. There are no recommendations for children with Down syndrome.

We ask NACI when we can expect a similar amendment to priority access of Stage 1 of the Canadian Guidelines to specifically include all Canadian adults with Down syndrome?

In the meantime, we continue to promote all public health measures and stress that all individuals discuss receiving a vaccine with their primary care practitioner.

Regards,

Laura LaChance

Laura LaChance
Interim Executive Director, The Canadian Down Syndrome Society