



This communication is intended to provide timely and important information to our municipal leaders, health system partners, health and hospital foundations, and other community based organizations. Please feel free to distribute among your stakeholders as appropriate.

### **| COVID-19 | Immunization Campaign – 5 Minute Message**

Our campaign reaches a new milestone this week- immunization is expanding to children 12 years of age and older. This is a tremendous step forward in protecting as many people from the virus as possible. In June, school-based immunization will commence. This effort will take approximately three weeks, and will conclude before the end of the school year. Read more in this week's [5-Minute Message](#).

Please see the Government of Saskatchewan [website](#) for updated information on the vaccine rollout.

### **| COVID-19 | Proceed with Caution: Think Twice Before Gathering**

*By Dr. Kevin Wasko, Physician Executive for Integrated Rural Health*

Over a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, we are all craving human interaction. We long to gather with family and friends. Holidays and celebrations carry special meaning to all of us and are important in order to feel connected to one's community and social circles.

As our case counts start to decrease, there is a temptation to attend or host social gatherings. Perhaps you know that you have been following the public health orders and you trust that your friends or family are as well. **However, over the course of the past year, we have seen time and again that large gatherings carry risk and are a major factor in community spread of COVID-19.**

**This is how a super-spreader event takes hold.** This recently occurred in the Southwest where a single gathering has spread to dozens of people in numerous communities. **Critical illness can be traced back to that event.** The impact is still being felt as COVID-19 continues to spread in the area.



Fortunately, with warm weather upon us, we have the opportunity to get outside where it is easier to distance and where COVID is less likely to spread. It means we can also participate in activities such as hiking, cycling and water sports in a distanced manner. Remaining active and maintaining social connection is important for our mental health and well-being. Please pursue these smarter options when gathering with others!

Right now our province is doing better: our immunization rates continue to climb and our case numbers are dropping. However, that's not reason to let our guard down yet. We need more people fully immunized with two doses and



community spread curtailed before we are able to gather like we used to. **Hang in there!** We will be out of the pandemic soon enough if we all do our part: wash our hands, wear a mask, get immunized and be smart about gathering with friends and family! Stay safe!

### **/ COVID-19 / ICYMI: Emergency Operations Commander, Derek Miller, Discusses Vaccine**

Derek Miller, head of the Saskatchewan Health Authority’s Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) discusses the plan for second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, and the rollout strategy in schools. Listen here: <https://iono.fm/e/1042179>.

### **/ COVID-19 / Clinics Encourage Vaccine Uptake with New Canadians**

Navigating the seemingly endless narrative around COVID-19 vaccines isn’t an easy task – now, imagine doing that as a new Canadian, and English isn’t your first language.

That is one of the barriers that some of Saskatoon’s mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics aim to address. One such clinic for newcomers was held at Saskatoon Global Gathering Place on May 16, in partnership with the Refugee Engagement and Community Health Clinic (REACH).

“Even without being a newcomer, there is a lot of information out there and it’s ever-changing,” said Dr. Satchan Takaya, Pandemic Area Chief of Staff for Saskatoon. “Hesitancy within the newcomer community is not necessarily about people not wanting the vaccine but more about access to vaccine. We have heard from some people that they just didn’t know how to get the vaccine and how to navigate the system.”



About 220 individuals were immunized at the clinic on Sunday. This was the second clinic held at Global Gathering Place and one of many mobile clinics in Saskatoon targeted toward people who face challenges to access the vaccine. Bringing the opportunity to be immunized closer to them, in a place that they are familiar with, is only one piece of the puzzle.

“There is definitely a language barrier and sometimes a mistrust of the Western medical system,” Takaya said. “It has taken a lot of phone calls and a lot of interpretation from our partners to get people to come.”

Attendees of the clinic on Sunday also got an extra surprise, thanks to the generosity of the *This is Our Shot* campaign. “One of our Patient Family Partners, Dianne Martin, sent me information about the campaign,” said Takaya. “I randomly



messed Hayley Wickenheiser, the campaign’s co-founder – who I don’t know! – and she connected us with a donation of 100 shirts that we handed out to people attending Sunday’s clinic.”

Through that campaign, the immunization team was also able to get vaccine FAQ documents in a number of languages, which were provided to the clinic attendees.

“The people that come to the clinic for vaccine obviously aren’t overly hesitant, but I’m hoping that they take those messages back to their families,” said Takaya. “That’s the hope, that they can spread the message that vaccines are safe, along with the positive vibes around getting the COVID shot, back to their community members.”

### **| COVID-19 | Do the Right Thing – Stay Home When You Have Symptoms**

People are counting on you. You have responsibilities. You take pride in showing up and doing a great job, no matter the obstacles. This attitude is admirable, but, when it comes to showing any COVID-19 symptoms, it’s crucial to remember that our most important responsibility is to do the right thing, stay home, seek testing if [symptomatic](#), and stop the spread.

All employees and physicians are reminded to [use the COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) every day prior to the start of their shifts.

On top of staying home from work when showing symptoms, take this same cautious attitude to running errands or anything else that brings you close to others. Encourage friends, family, and co-workers to take a similarly responsible attitude.

COVID-19 is sinister in how it can spread so easily, even asymptotically. A sure-fire way to avoid the spread is to listen to what our bodies are telling us by taking any and all symptoms seriously, no matter how small.



**“You’re never too young OR too old to ‘Stick it to COVID’ at 102 years of age.”**

Mrs. Rumak, Hudson Bay, SK resident  
Carmen Mackie, Public Health Nurse



[saskatchewan.ca/covid19-vaccine](https://saskatchewan.ca/covid19-vaccine)