



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 23, 2021

Saugeen First Nation (SFN)
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SAUGEEN FIRST NATION COVID-19 UPDATE IN RESPONSE TO THE RECENT VACCINATION ADMINISTRATION ERROR

Unfortunately, as many of our SFN community members are now aware, there was a vaccination administration error within Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

Although it has been unfortunate for the administration error to occur, it is important to emphasize the safety of the vaccine. The harm in administering an expired vaccine is the delay in receiving protection from the 2nd dose. Steps are being taken to provide the full immunity by re-administering the dose as soon as possible.

Currently, our SFN COVID-19 Response Team has been working closely with both ISC and our local Grey Bruce Health Unit to remedy this vaccination administration error.

“Under the leadership of the Chief and Band Council, it has been an honour for the Grey Bruce Health Unit team to support the good work of the Community Health Centre, and Federal partners in managing the COVID-19 outbreak in the community. Our team will continue to support in remedying this situation as well” said Dr. Ian Arra, Medical Officer of Health for Grey Bruce.

Our SFN COVID-19 Coordinator, Tara Campbell, has stated the following:

- ✓ Our vaccine shipment was received from public health on July 13th, 2021. The expiration date on the vials said October 2021. This expiration date is only correct if the vaccine remains in a frozen state
- ✓ When the vaccine is thawed and stored in a cooled but not frozen state, the vaccine is only good for 31 days if it's Pfizer, or 30 if it's Moderna. This is how vaccines were stored at the Health Centre by ISC. This means that the expiry date of October 2021 was no longer correct and that the vaccines were set to expire on August 9th.
- ✓ While the expiration date of August 9th was on the box that contained the vials, the expiration date on the vials themselves were not changed to reflect this as it wasn't in ISC protocol.
- ✓ While administering the doses the ISC nurses checked the expiry date on the vial and not on the box – this is how this error managed to occur.
- ✓ SFN staff that are involved in COVID-19 response were made aware of the fact that there was a potential error on September 15th. Public Health was notified and began to assist ISC in investigating what had happened.
- ✓ During this process Pfizer was contacted. On September 22nd SFN COVID-19 response staff were notified of Pfizer's response which stated that there is no harm in receiving an expired vaccine, however these individuals will need to be revaccinated.
- ✓ SFN staff, including the COVID-19 response staff, **were not responsible** for the handling of the vaccines.

Also, regarding the information that was recently provided by ISC, we are asking all of our SFN community members who are affected to please direct all questions you may have, via these 2 primary contacts:

Katrina Phillips (Community Health Nurse)
(519) 372-6816
sac.covid-19fnihbontario.isc@canada.ca

OR

Deborah Jonathon (ISC Nurse Manager)
(226) 387-4217
sac.covid-19fnihbontario.isc@canada.ca

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact Shari Glenn, Director of Primary Health Care, FNIHB Ontario Region at 613-608-9087 [shari.glenn@canada.ca] or Dr. Jo Ann Majerovich, Medical Officer, Health Protection Unit, FNIHB Ontario Region at 613-796-4673 [joann.majerovich@canada.ca].

Finally, we know that this will cause stress in the community and may affect the livelihood of those affected until they can get revaccinated. Please know that we're working with ISC, Public Health, and GBHU to resolve this issue the best way that we can to help our community move forward.

Chi-Miigwetch,

SFN COVID-19 Response Team
