Accessibility Task Force on COVID 19 Vaccines: Overview and Recommendations

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Accessibility Task Force on COVID 19 Vaccines

- The City of Toronto's Accessibility Task Force on COVID 19 Vaccines formed in March 2021 to:
- make recommendations to effectively close equity gaps in current vaccine planning and increase vaccination rates among people with disabilities and their caregivers;
- share knowledge about COVID-19 infection risks and measures that reduce risks, and enhance testing and safety practices across disability communities;
- identify, review and address concerns with COVID-19 vaccines and barriers to accessing the vaccine

Rationale

- Other jurisdictions (UK, US) have found people with disabilities have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic:
- Updated estimates of coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by disability status, England: 24 January to 20 November 2020: “Disabled people made up 6 in 10 (59.5%) of all deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) for the period to 20 November 2020 (30,296 of 50,888 deaths). For comparison, disabled people made up 17.2% of the study population, therefore suggesting that disabled people have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.”
- "People with learning disabilities are dying of coronavirus at more than six times the rate of the general population“ https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/12/covid-deaths-for-people-with-learning-disability-in-england-six-times-average
- Disaggregated data on COVID and people with disabilities not collected in Toronto or Canada

Covid deaths for people with learning disability in England six times average

Campaigners say report on first wave shows government failed to protect the most vulnerable

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▲ The higher death rate is likely to reflect underlying health problems, greater vulnerability to respiratory infections and difficulties following Covid rules. Photograph: Christopher Thomond/The Guardian

People with learning disabilities are dying of coronavirus at more than six

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Covid: Disabled people account for six in 10 deaths in England last year - ONS

11 February

Coronavirus pandemic



COVID Impact

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3 Feb 2021 13.56 GMT
99,906

Fury at 'do not resuscitate' notices given to Covid patients with learning disabilities

Vulnerable people have encountered 'shocking discrimination' during pandemic, says Mencap charity

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▲ 'People with learning disabilities already get a raw deal from the health services.' Photograph: Nathan Stirk/Getty Images

People with learning disabilities have been given do not resuscitate orders during the second wave of the pandemic, in spite of widespread

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COMMENTARY

The Devastating Impact of Covid-19 on Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities in the United States

A study across 547 U.S. health care organizations finds that individuals with intellectual disabilities are at substantially increased risk of dying from Covid-19.

By Jonathan Gleason, MD, Wendy Ross, MD, Alexander Fossi, MPHc, Heather Blonsky, MAS, Jane Tobias, DNP, RN, MSN, CPNP-PC & Mary Stephens, MD

March 5, 2021

Summary

A cross-sectional study of 64,858,460 patients across 547 health care organizations reveals that having an intellectual disability was the strongest independent risk factor for presenting with a Covid-19 diagnosis and the strongest independent risk factor other than age for Covid-19 mortality. Screening for Covid-19, care coordination, and vaccination efforts should be

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Recommendations March 2021

- To date, the Task Force developed the following recommendations:

  1. That people with disabilities who rely on daily service provision/are resident in congregate care settings are immediately prioritized in phase 1 of the vaccine roll-out

  2. That the City of Toronto's Vaccine roll-out partners, including Ontario Health Teams and Toronto Public Health, work with supportive housing and developmental service providers to immediately:

     - a. Identify priority days for client vaccine bookings
     - b. Identify mobile/outreach teams to vaccinate people in congregate care settings who cannot travel to a vaccination site
     - c. Provide vaccines directly to Vibrant Healthcare Alliance and Safe Haven for use in disability community specific vaccine clinics

Result of March Recommendations

- TPH provided space to TF disability agencies to book 200 people with disabilities living in congregate care settings.
- People with developmental disabilities in congregate care settings reported to be at 100% vaccinated
- This is not yet the case for homebound people with disabilities or people with other disabilities in congregate settings

Additional Recommendations

- Acknowledging the growing COVID-19 case counts and the increased risk presented by Ontario's Critical Care Triage Protocol will be invoked, the Accessibility Task Force on COVID-19 Vaccines at the City of Toronto recommends that people with disabilities be prioritized for vaccination to avoid the potential need for hospital and critical care admission.

- The urgent vaccination of people with disabilities requires the provision of:
    1. A simplified, centralized vaccine booking process that includes disability related priority groups and navigation support for disabled people.
    2. Accessibility and accommodations training for staff at vaccine clinics to appropriately provide accommodations and care from a human rights perspective.
    3. Accessible clinic locations that include private, quiet spaces available for those who require this as an accommodation, and other accommodations as requested.

Recommendations cont.

4. Disability-specific clinics such as mobile, drive through, and pop-up community clinics that are appropriately resourced to ensure these options are offered in a timely fashion.

5. Prioritized access to in-home vaccination through existing mobile vaccination outreach methods including EMS and OHT mediated mobile vaccination efforts.

6. Clear communications and navigation resources (in accessible formats such as Braille, plain language, ASL) specific to people with disabilities access information about their eligibility and how to access vaccines.

Ongoing Task Force Reporting and Initiatives

- To ensure ongoing improvements, the Task Force requests:
  - Resources, supports for and implementation of our additional recommendations
  - Ongoing opportunities to report to BOH
  - Additional disability specific clinics