

# Trustee Update

James Li • Ward 13: Don Valley North

Toronto District School Board

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Dear Friends

Thank you for attending the Ward 13 Toronto Public Health Information Session on COVID-19 and Vaccination, presented by Nicole Welch, Director of Child Health & Development and Chief Nursing Officer, and Dr. Vinita Dubey, Associate Medical Officer of Health.

Please see below for the minutes from our meeting.

Meeting Date/Time: April 20, 2021 at 6:30 pm

Meeting Location: Zoom Online Meeting hosted by Trustee James Li

Number of Attendees: 62 participants

## **Meeting Minutes**

**6:30:** Trustee James Li - Introductions and Land Acknowledgement

**6:37:** Presentation by Nicole Welch and Dr. Vinita Dubey

[\(Update on COVID-19: Schools and Vaccines\)](#)

**7:15:** Q&A begins

**Q:** Have schools started doing asymptomatic testing? For example, if a student just wants to get tested, is that allowed?

**A: Nicole Welch**

- There is a program that's being run through the Ministry of Education, where they've contracted Life labs
- Toronto Public Health (TPH) does a lot of recommendations for asymptomatic testing within schools
- Since February, 5 schools have participated
- People who have had COVID in the past shed the virus for up to three months resulting in false positive

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Results are up on the provincial website (refer to slide deck)
- Asymptomatic testing has had a low percent positivity (0.6%)

**Q:** Someone said, that the AstraZeneca Vaccine is not as good as Pfizer or Moderna in protection against other variants. Is that true?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Pfizer and AstraZeneca have been very effective against the UK variant
- It is recommended that you take any vaccine you are eligible for
- AstraZeneca will protect you against the variant
- Vaccines also provide enough protection to keep you out of hospital

**Q:** On March 26, 2021, Canada suspended AZ for women under 50. Is it still suspended? AZ appointments for ages 40+ opens today. Is it for both men and women?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Rare side effect was found in young female healthcare workers
- Rare side effect can occur in all ages
- No risk factors such as age, sex, medication, previous blood clot-related to rare side effect
- In Ontario the vaccine is still recommended and eligible for anyone who is 40 years and older, both men and women

**Q:** When should we expect school-aged children to be vaccinated?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Not enough vaccine
- Children are not getting as sick
- Risks are more in adult
- Recommendations are being made for 16 years or 12 if licensed
- Once there is enough vaccine and it's licensed you can expect children to have them

**Q:** If vaccines will be given to children, will that be manipulated at school or home?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- No recommendation for children right now
- Vaccine needs to be stored at -70 degrees
- Can't be easily taken to school to vaccinate
- Plans may change summer/fall

**Q:** There has been news and a rumor that patients in Ontario have been moved to different cities because our hospitals are full, but I saw temporary structures near Sunnybrook and downtown so I thought that we were building additional facilities to

accommodate COVID patients. Do we have plans for that, or are we in danger right now?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- We are in danger
- Patients are being send around the province
- COVID numbers are high and ICUs are full
- Sunnybrook field hospitals are set up but not activated yet
- Need staff to manage field hospital

**Q:** Are there any plans to add more measures for testing and tracing?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Targets are for 24 hour testing
- Test results are on the website
- Point of care test and rapid test being used in Ontario
- Contact tracing has to be managed differently, TPH will be vigilant against virus

**A: Nicole Welch**

- Detected cases within classrooms were sent home to self-isolate
- High risk contact need to self isolate while waiting for results
- Outbreak management is done at school
- High COVID numbers makes it difficult to contact trace

**Q:** Once vaccines are available for children, will TDSB consider mandating the COVID vaccine before return to school, like they mandate other vaccinations?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Once the COVID vaccine is available they might add it to the ISP (Immunization School People's Act)

**Q:** Is it is safe to have doses of two different brands within a certain period of time?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- UK is doing a trial with Pfizer and AstraZeneca
- It's called a mixed schedule but we need more information
- It's recommended to stay with the same vaccine for a first and second dose

**Q:** Is there a central location where Toronto residents can check regularly?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Pop up clinics are just pop up not registered
- Community organizations are notifying their groups
- Just for that community

**Q:** When will the second dose be available for people who received the first dose at pop-up?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

[revised after meeting]

- Plan is to notify people for the second dose
- Pop up clinic administrators will schedule a 2nd dose for these residents and they will get an email/text from them

**Q:** Would there be any potential risks for children and young adults who took the vaccine, such as side effects that could appear in the future (in a couple of years)?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Long term side effects are not common, and rare
- Vaccine is less than a year
- COVID is here now and children can spread and develop long COVID
- Pfizer and Moderna just started being studied in summer
- Waiting for Health Canada to license vaccine for children

**Q:** Is there any data showing side effects with the vaccine with patients taking biologics for autoimmune diseases?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Vaccine is safe
- Question is if your body will develop immune response
- Talk to your doctor about timing your medication with your vaccination

**Q:** I am not eligible for this age group nor am I in a hot spot. When will it be my turn?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Phase 3 will be for 18 or older available in June or earlier
- In the meantime keep doing what you can to prevent COVID

**Q:** When will caretakers and daycare staff get vaccinated?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Mid-May for those who are essential workers who can't work from home

**Q:** How long does the vaccine last?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- 6 months
- Booster shot if required

**Q:** Will the family doctor be available to inject vaccine for the patients?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Astra Zeneca to be sent to doctor's offices, check with your doctors

**Q:** Is it important to have the same brand of vaccination for your first and second dose?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Recommendation is to stay with the same brand
- Except Johnson and Johnson which is single dose vaccine

**Q:** Is mobile app COVID Alert reliable?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- It is recommended you download the app
- Notifies you of any close contact with COVID
- Federal app

**Q:** Do you have statistics of all positive cases by the occupations and any plans to send vaccines to high risk work places?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- Information is collected by TPH
- Website has lists of workplace outbreaks
- Government announced workplace strategy for vaccine
- Work from home the best option where possible

**Q:** Would the Johnson & Johnson vaccine need a booster after 6 months?

**A: Vinita Dubey**

- No, Johnson & Johnson is a single dose vaccine

**7:48:** Q&A concluded for Dr. Dubey and Ms. Welch

Trustee James Li, Superintendent Courtney Lewis and Superintendent Addo answered questions from parents

PIAC announcements including important dates:

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 - Let's Talk Human Rights

Saturday, May 1 and Sunday, May 2, 2021 - [Breaking Barriers by Changing Biases](#)

**8:01:** Meeting Concluded



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