

December 7, 2020

Dr. Bonnie Henry
Provincial Health Officer
PO Box 9648 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9P4

Via email: ProvHlthOffice@gov.bc.ca

Dear Dr. Henry,

BC Care Providers Association and EngAge BC's members are heartened by the news that a vaccine is likely to be available to priority groups early in the New Year. As we look forward to the vaccine's roll out, our Association would like to stress the importance of including as many employees as possible who work alongside seniors and our vulnerable populations. These workers would include, for example, those employed by privately funded long-term care and assisted living homes and family-retained (i.e., private pay) home health operators.

Furthermore, employees working in B.C.'s independent living residences providing front-line services such as preparing meals and providing housekeeping, should also be included in the initial phases of vaccine distribution.

As you will be aware, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) – the independent committee charged with deciding who should be the first Canadians to be vaccinated against COVID-19 – recently released its final directive recommending that long-term care home residents and seniors over the age of 80 get priority access to vaccinations.

While BCCPA/EngAge BC supports this recommendation, our members are concerned that the thousands of workers in private LTC/AL, home health and independent living might not be included in this group. Given the age and risk factors of this group of elderly British Columbians, including the aforementioned group of workers is a critical step in mitigating against any further impact COVID-19 may have on B.C.'s seniors.

As the province works to determine who receives early access to vaccinations, we hope that these recommendations will be taken under consideration.

Sincerely,



Terry Lake,
CEO

CC: Hon. Adrian Dix, Minister of Health