

Ontario rolls out COVID-19 vaccine

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

Ontario delivered the first COVID-19 vaccine in Canada on Monday (Dec. 14), marking a historic day for the country's fight against the novel coronavirus.

Antia Quidangen, a personal support worker at a long-term care home in Toronto was first to receive the shot and over 2,500 other health care workers are getting vaccinated in the coming weeks.

Premier Doug Ford recognized Quidangen during a speech on Dec. 14, following the vaccine's distribution.

"She has worked tirelessly to care for some of our most vulnerable, both throughout this pandemic and since her first days as a PSW in 1988," said Ford. "Anita has spent years rolling up her sleeves to protect our province, and today, she didn't hesitate to find a new way to do so. She represents the best of the Ontario Spirit."

The launch of the vaccine is the first phase of a three-phase vaccine implementation plan and marks the beginning of the "long journey to return back to normal life," according to Ford.

"I encourage everyone to be patient. This is the biggest immunization program in a century, and our vaccine supply will arrive in stages," he said. "General Hillier and the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force are working with Health Canada and other provincial and territorial partners to ensure the vaccines are distributed quickly, so people can get immunized as soon as possible."

With the good news of progress on a vaccine, it's essential that Canadians stay vigilant until it is available for mass distribution, noted Ford.

"This is a watershed moment - the beginning of the end of this terrible pandemic. The light at the end of the tunnel grows brighter every day, but we must remain on our guard," he remarked.

"As we continue to rollout these vaccines, I'm asking all Ontarians to please continue following the public health measures to keep everyone safe and healthy, especially during the holiday season. Avoid social gatherings, wear a mask when required, practice physical distancing, wash your hands frequently, and download the COVID Alert app. As we await the arrival of more vaccines, this is our best and only defence against this deadly virus."