

Trudeau: Canada to get Pfizer vaccine by end of this year

December 7 2020, by Rob Gillies



A healthcare worker talks to people as they wait to be tested for COVID-19 at a testing clinic in Montreal, Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020. (Graham Hughes/The Canadian Press via AP)

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Monday Canada will get up to 249,000 doses of the vaccine developed by American drugmaker Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech before the end of December.

The vaccine is expected to be approved by Health Canada as soon as Thursday.

Trudeau had come under criticism from opposition parties for saying Canadians won't be among the first to get a vaccine against COVID-19 because the first doses will likely go to citizens of the countries they are made in. Canada doesn't have mass vaccine-production facilities.

Trudeau said Canada recently amended the contract with Pfizer so that it would deliver up to 249,000 doses this month. That will mean about 124,500 of the highest risk Canadians will get vaccinated at first as two doses are required per person a few weeks apart.

"We are now contracted to receive up to 249,000 of our initial doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine in the month of December," Trudeau said. "Pending Health Canada approval, the first shipment of doses is tracking for delivery next week."

Canada has contracts with six other vaccine makers as well.

Trudeau said 14 distribution centers will be located in large Canadian cities initially. There will be one in each province and two each in Canada's four largest provinces.



A Santa wearing a protective face mask to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 stays physically distanced as he visits Serena and Ariana Eslami at their home in Abbotsford, British Columbia, Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020. With the global pandemic, even Santa Claus has had to take precautions to stay safe as he visits children and to get photos prior to Christmas. (Jonathan Hayward/The Canadian Press via AP)



A sign regarding mask use to help curb the spread of COVID-19 hangs outside a business in Vancouver, British Columbia, Sunday, Dec. 6, 2020. (Darryl Dyck/The Canadian Press via AP)



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau holds a press conference at Rideau Cottage during the COVID pandemic in Ottawa on Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2020. (Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press via AP)

He said millions of more doses will be on the way.

"It has been a difficult year, and we are not out of this crisis yet," Trudeau said. "But now, vaccines are coming."

Retired Gen. Rick Hillier, who leads the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force in Canada's largest province of Ontario, said he expects Ontario to get about 85,000 doses this month for roughly 42,500 people. Hillier said seniors and workers in long-term care homes are among those expected to get the vaccine first.

And he expects Ontario to get at least 1.2 million people in vaccinated in the first three months of next year. Ontario has a population 14.5 million.

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