

January 25, 2021

## BCDHA Statement on Changes to B.C.'s Vaccination Rollout

VANCOUVER--The British Columbia Dental Hygienists Association is disappointed with government's decision to change the COVID-19 vaccine rollout plan. We had been reassured that dental professionals would be included in Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout [as per the recommendations of Canada's National Advisory Council on Immunizations \(NACI\)](#). To hear that our provincial government has reversed this decision without notification or consultation has frustrated Dental Hygienists and other health professionals who have given their time and resources -- and risked their own health -- to ensure the best health care possible is provided to all British Columbians during this pandemic.

BCDHA supports the need for a phased immunization approach and recognizes that many groups and individuals are disappointed by the B.C. government's sudden change in direction for how immunizations will roll out in our province. However, we firmly believe that the recommendations of the NACI report should be upheld in B.C., and that dental professionals should be moved to Phase 2 for several reasons:

- Oral health care is an essential service.
- Oral health patients cannot wear a mask during treatment.
- Many oral health procedures require the use of aerosols which are considered to be a risk for COVID transmission.

[According to the US Department of Labour](#), Dental Hygienists are the profession most at risk of infection from COVID-19, followed closely by Dentists and Dental Assistants. Other provinces, such as [Ontario](#), have recognized this by following the NACI guidelines and including oral health professionals in the earliest phases of their vaccination programs.

Earlier today BCDHA sent a letter to Premier Horgan and Minister Dix, asking them to reconsider this decision and provide an opportunity for further consultation and discussion.

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