



April 12, 2021

To: Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Council of Medical Officers of Health (COMOH)
Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHA)

Cc. Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Hon. Christine Elliot, Minister of Health
Hon. Lisa Macleod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture

Re: COVID-19 Vaccinations for Ontario’s Hotel Employees

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of Ontario’s hospitality community, we are urgently requesting that employees of hotels be classified as a priority to receive the COVID-19 vaccination at the same time as restaurant employees who work at the same property.

The hotel sector has been decimated throughout the pandemic and the journey to recovery will be tough, which includes implications for its workforce. Hotels need to be in a strong position with healthy employees in order to wither the storms and contribute to Ontario’s economy.

Hotels have disbursed significant funding, training and effort into implementing necessary safety protocols in order to ensure the safety of their employees and their guests. By nature of the business, hotel work continues to include close interaction with various persons and their belongings. Hotel employment positions such as room attendants include cleaning tasks that are predominately centered around scrubbing, dusting and washing areas where guests touch, breathe and reside in. This results in hotel employees being in the front-lines and in vulnerable positions with potential exposure to COVID-19, leaving them defenceless.

As outlined by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) prioritization statement, these individuals maintain a workforce for a critical service and are unable to work virtually. Many of these employees work in hotel locations where arrivals from the various USA border crossings throughout Ontario bringing additional risks including exposure to the highly concerning COVID-19 variants.

Since the pandemic began, these workers have been taking serious risks no matter how much effort the hotels apply in following safety protocols. The recent prioritization of vaccinations among worker groups has raised concerns among hotel employees as to why they have been left out when their job is directly on the front-line servicing guests.

We are asking for Ontario’s health table to deem hotel employees a priority to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as the hotel restaurant employees who work alongside their hotel colleagues. We look forward to your support in ensuring this is implemented and would be pleased to discuss further.

Yours in hospitality,

Tony Elenis, President & CEO
Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA)

Terry Mundell, President & CEO
Greater Toronto Hotel Association (GTHA)

Steve Ball, President
Ottawa Gatineau Hotel Association (OGHA)

A. Douglas Birrell
Niagara Falls Canada Hotel Association (NFCHA)

Krista LeClair, Executive Director
Kingston Accommodation Partners (KAP)

Grace Sammut, Executive Director
Resorts of Ontario