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### Administration of the 2nd dose of vaccines against COVID-19 to residents of CHSLDs in the context of the start of a third pandemic wave and sub-optimal vaccination coverage among healthcare workers in these settings

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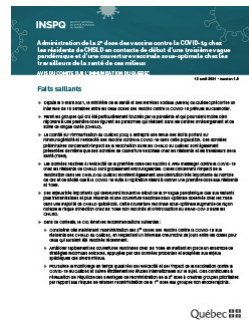
- Since March 3, 2021, the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) has recommended an interval of 16 weeks between the two scheduled doses of COVID-19 vaccines.
- Among the groups that have been particularly affected by the pandemic and who may respond less well to a first dose are people who reside in residential and long-term care centers (CHSLDs).
- The Comité sur l'immunization du Québec (CIQ) has undertaken a review of the literature on the immunogenicity and efficacy of vaccines against COVID-19 in this population. Preliminary data on the impact of vaccination in CHSLDs in Quebec are also presented, as well as data on vaccination coverage among residents and health care workers (TdeS).
- Data on the efficacy of the first dose of messenger RNA vaccines against COVID-19 in CHSLD residents are generally encouraging. Those concerning the impact of vaccination in CHSLDs in Quebec also show a very significant decrease in the number of cases and deaths due to COVID-19 following the operation to give a first dose to residents and TdeS.
- Very important issues that remain include the start of the 3rd pandemic wave due to more transmissible and more virulent variants and sub-optimal vaccination coverage observed among TdeS in a majority of Quebec CHSLDs. This suboptimal vaccination coverage significantly increases the risk of infection in unvaccinated TdeS and of the introduction of SARS-CoV-2 into CHSLDs.
- In this context, the CIQ makes the following recommendations:
  - Consider administering the 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccines now to residents of CHSLDs in Quebec, respecting an interval of at least 28 days between doses for those who have been vaccinated recently.
  - Rapidly improve vaccination coverage among TdeS by implementing a set of strategies recognized as effective, supported by evidence and adapted to the specific issues of various settings.
  - Continue near real-time monitoring of the effectiveness and impact of vaccination against COVID-19 in Quebec and closely follow international studies on the subject. This will help assess the balance of benefits of administering the 2nd dose to other priority groups versus the risks of delaying the administration of the 1st dose to groups not yet reached.

In December 2020, faced with the shortage of vaccines against COVID-19 and the high circulation of SARS-CoV-2, the Committee on Immunization of Quebec (CIQ) proposed to offer a 1st dose to the greatest number of people, belonging to the first six priority groups (mainly people aged 70 and over) and to delay the administration of the second dose (1-3). A similar position has been taken by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI)(4). Since March 3, 2021, the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) has recommended a 16-week interval between doses for the administration of all COVID-19 vaccines used in Quebec that require 2 doses. (5). Among the groups that have been particularly affected by the pandemic and who may respond less well to a first dose are people who reside in residential and long-term care centers (CHSLDs). A literature review on the immunogenicity and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines in this population was undertaken. Preliminary data on the impact of vaccination in CHSLDs in Quebec are also presented, as well as data on vaccination coverage among residents and health care workers (TdeS). Recommendations are made concerning the administration of the 2nd dose of messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines in these environments and the importance of increasing vaccination coverage among the people who work there.

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