

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Older Canadians' Lack of Access to COVID-19 Vaccines is Creating a Deadly Gap***New Report Provides Recommendations to Increase Vaccination Access for Older Adults*

**TORONTO, April 15, 2021** – Older Canadians continue to experience the highest risk of serious illness and death as a result of COVID-19. They are also the most willing to be vaccinated. However, reports across the country reveal growing, and potentially deadly, gaps between the number of older adults who want the vaccine and those who have been vaccinated.

In a new report, *If Older Canadians Want a COVID-19 Vaccine, Why Is Canada Struggling to Get Them Vaccinated?*, the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) shows that low uptake of COVID-19 vaccines among older Canadians is not due to lack of demand or supply, but rather is a matter of access. While more than 90 per cent of Canadians aged 75 and older are willing to be vaccinated – compared to 76 per cent of the general population – less than 75 per cent of those within this group have been vaccinated thus far.

“Older Canadians have accounted for more than 95 per cent of Canada’s COVID-19-related deaths,” says Dr. Samir Sinha, Director of Health Policy Research at the NIA and lead author of the report. “Eliminating the barriers older Canadians face in accessing COVID-19 vaccines is critical. Providing older adults with vaccination is a highly efficient and effective strategy for protecting Canada’s most vulnerable population while also slowing the virus’ spread.”

The NIA has developed five policy recommendations that would support provincial and territorial governments to deliver vaccines more quickly and equitably to older Canadians and save the most lives. These include:

1. Create more culturally targeted information campaigns that speak to older adults from a diversity of backgrounds
2. Provide a variety of methods to book vaccination appointments, beyond online options
3. Expand vaccine administration to primary care providers, pharmacies and community clinics
4. Develop comprehensive mobile outreach strategies, especially targeting homebound older adults and areas where there is a concentration of older Canadians living in close proximity
5. Shorten the interval between first and second doses for older Canadians to expedite becoming fully immunized

“Integrating these strategies into provincial and territorial vaccine rollout plans has the potential to save lives and move our communities closer to herd immunity faster,” says Dr. Sinha. “In line with federal guidelines, and medical and scientific evidence, governments must continue to prioritize older Canadians and close the gap to ensure those who want the vaccine have access to one as quickly as possible.”

The report's five recommendations provide a blueprint for meaningfully addressing the barriers older Canadians face in accessing COVID-19 vaccinations. By taking these actions, provincial and territorial government would reduce lives lost from COVID-19 while building a foundation for a more equitable rollout for younger Canadians as they become eligible.

[Access the full report and recommendations.](#)

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*The National Institute on Ageing is a Ryerson University think tank focused on the realities of Canada's ageing population. Follow us on Twitter [@RyersonNIA](#)*

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