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Hello everyone! Happy New Year and welcome to 2021! This weeks post will focus on the ethical framework that has been released regarding the COVID-19 vaccination. Due to the limited initial supply of the vaccine, the government released a framework in an effort to ethically distribute the vaccination to Canadians.

Currently, we are still sitting in Phase 1 of the vaccine distributions where priority, as discussed in previous posts, has been dedicated to front line workers and those most at risk such as seniors in long term care homes. Phase 2 is expected to begin in March when Ontario receives more of the vaccine doses which will still be allocated for front line workers and at-risk populations. Phase 3 is expected later in the 2021 year as the vaccines should become available to the general public. It is within Phase 3 that the ethical framework will be most utilized in order to prioritize the distribution within the general population.

The ethical framework was created to remain as transparent as possible when it comes to distribution. Their first ethical consideration is to maximize benefits and minimize harm. This is to ensure that the distribution prioritizes those at greatest risk due to a variety of factors: biological, social, geographical, occupational, etc.

The framework also focuses on equity in distribution without bias or discrimination. Equity is different from equality, as equality focuses on *equal* distribution regardless of extenuating circumstances, while equity focuses on proper distribution of resources proportionately to achieve a fair outcome. This focus on equity will ensure benefits for populations experiencing greater risks due to the virus, such as racialized communities who experience COVID-19 complications at a higher rate than other populations. This concept may also encompass another priority in the framework which is fairness. This ensures inclusivity and consistency being applied to various communities in Ontario.

The framework aims to be transparent and provide rationale and principles behind their decision making processes and plans. It aims to utilize accessible wording that is easily communicated and understood by the general public. This reinforces another aspect of the framework which is public trust. This ensures that decisions and decision making processes are created to foster trust with the community.

Most importantly, legitimacy. This means that decisions are based on the best available scientific evidence. This also includes feedback and contributions from historically under-represented groups to remain as inclusive as possible and best serve the diverse Ontario

Hopefully this has cleared up some questions surrounding the ethical framework that has been released by the Ontario government. Dedication to equity and fairness will hopefully ease the transition and facilitate a smooth distribution of resources.

Until next week everyone, stay safe and stay healthy!

North Yorkers for Disabled Persons