

May 6, 2021

Dear Colleagues and Learners:

As the College makes its final preparations for [AC Day 1](#) and the start of the 2021 Spring Term next week, the recent [announcement](#) that the Province of Ontario is expected to open vaccine availability to all residents over the age of 18 by the end of May comes as welcome news.

Thanks to the anticipated arrival of additional vaccine doses, the opportunity for the majority of our College community to be immunized is now close at hand. I know that many of our employees and learners have already received their first injection, and I continue to encourage everyone to receive the vaccine when it is offered by checking the websites for [Ottawa Public Health](#), the [Renfrew County District Health Unit](#) or the [Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit](#). You can also check the [Province's vaccination portal](#).

The Province is also allocating more vaccines to 'hot spots' with the assistance of mobile teams, pop-up clinics, mass immunization clinics, hospitals, primary care facilities and pharmacies. The postal codes for Ottawa region 'hot spots' can be checked via Ottawa Public Health's website [here](#).

These encouraging developments come as Ontario's [stay at home order](#) remains in full effect (April 8 to May 19) – with enhanced public health measures and travel restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Vera Etches' [special statement](#) last week said that the "rates of COVID-19 in the community, while still high, are stabilizing," and added that the "current Provincial measures need to remain in place for a little while longer. If the restrictions are lifted too soon, we risk entering another resurgence." As such, it remains critical that we follow all public health guidelines, as the combination of strict adherence to these rules and ongoing vaccination is the most effective and efficient way forward.

I would also like to address comments made last week in the media concerning the potential of halting the arrival of international students to Ontario. The College continues to seek additional information on this matter, and as of today, has not received confirmation of any travel suspension for our international students. We will continue to monitor the situation and relay any pertinent updates immediately.

As we continue to protect ourselves, our loved ones and our neighbours from the risk of COVID-19, it also remains equally important to be mindful of our own mental health needs. This week the College is raising awareness around these issues during Mental Health Awareness [Week](#) (May 3 to 9) and thanking donors who support our learners through initiatives such as the [Respect RX Pharmacy Perseverance Bursary](#).

The day-to-day pressures and the impacts of the pandemic pose challenges for many of us. If you feel the need to reach out, please know you are not alone, and that the College has a full-range of [resources](#) available to you.

This week, we are also highlighting some of the partnerships we have forged to more effectively address the mental health needs of the entire College Community. This includes our ongoing [partnership with The Royal](#) to provide mental health services to our learners, and [recent funding](#) through the Bell Let's Talk initiative to support the mental health needs of the College community.

We have all experienced an incredibly difficult year - some more so than others. I am extremely proud of everyone for their hard work, and their commitment to student success. To acknowledge the importance of mental health, and to recognize the incredible patience and dedication of our employees, I am announcing that Friday, July 2, 2021 will be designated as "Employee Appreciation and Wellness Day", and the College's four campuses will be closed on that day. Further details will be sent out towards the end of May providing specifics of this decision to ensure clarity for our employees and learners.

As we continue to make progress and return to more normalized routines, it is re-energizing to see spring flowers blooming and trees bursting with news buds. May is a month that offers a much needed respite from the winter, and also provides us an opportunity to celebrate Mother's Day. To all the Moms across our College Community, I offer my best wishes and hope you have a safe and wonderful day.

Sincerely,

Claude Brulé  
President and CEO