



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

February 16, 2023

Health ministry able to monitor COVID vaccinations, with some gaps and risks found

VICTORIA—B.C.'s auditor general recommends the Ministry of Health ensure it can access current registries of residents and staff in long-term care and assisted living residences, and for health-care workers. The recommendations are in a report on the ministry's monitoring of COVID-19 vaccination rates.

The report says the ministry monitored and shared timely information on vaccination rates with public health officials to help shape the vaccination campaign and inform key public health decisions such as mask mandates and public gatherings. However, it sometimes struggled to collect reliable information for high-risk groups.

The audit looked at vaccination coverage for the entire province, by age and location. It also looked at some high-risk groups: long-term care and assisted living residents and staff in approximately 500 facilities, and health-care workers.

"COVID vaccinations were critical to the pandemic response and reliable information on the coverage rate was important for managing the vaccine campaign, particularly when the supply was limited," says Auditor General Michael Pickup. "We found the health ministry was able to collect and share information consistently, but it had challenges in getting reliable information for some of the high-risk population groups."

The ministry launched a new health information system, ImmsBC, in April 2021 to meet the needs of a mass vaccination campaign, including managing registrations, appointment bookings, and vaccine inventories.

The ministry was able to consistently monitor vaccination coverage across the province, and by age and location.

However, data collection for long-term care and assisted living residents and staff was cumbersome, meaning the vaccinations estimates for these groups could have been inaccurate. There is no centralized registry of residents or staff in the province's 500 long-term care and assisted living facilities.

The ministry monitored vaccination rates for health-care workers employed by health authorities or working in health authority facilities, but from February to October 2021 this information was unreliable because the vaccination eligibility estimate was out-of-date. While there are registries of health-care workers, the ministry did not have access until vaccination became mandatory in October 2021.

The audit report, *B.C.'s COVID-19 Response: Monitoring Vaccination Coverage*, recommends the health ministry improve its ability to respond to future public health needs by ensuring it has access to current registries for: (1) residents and staff at long-term care and assisted living facilities, and (2) health-care workers.



Office of the
Auditor General
of British Columbia

The vaccination program saw nearly 14 million doses in the first two years, giving priority to high-risk populations such as older people, their caregivers, and health-care workers. The audit covered the period from December 2020 to February 2022.

Related links

[B.C.'s COVID-19 Response: Monitoring Vaccination Coverage](#)

[Audit at a Glance](#)

[Video](#)

For general questions and interview requests:

Nicholas Johnson

Manager, Communications

njohnson@bcauditor.com

250-419-6117

[Subscribe to receive report eAlerts.](#)