

Board of Health Briefing Note

To: Chair and Members of the Board of Health
Date: December 1, 2021
Topic: COVID-19 5 to 11 Vaccine Planning Survey
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RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Timiskaming Board of Health:

1. Receive update on 'COVID-19 5 to 11 Vaccine Planning Survey' report for information.

Background

Vaccination against COVID-19 is a key component of preventing COVID-19 cases and reducing morbidity and mortality from this pandemic. As of November 24, 2021 84% of Timiskaming residents 12+ have been fully vaccinated and over 51, 000 doses have been given in our health unit area.

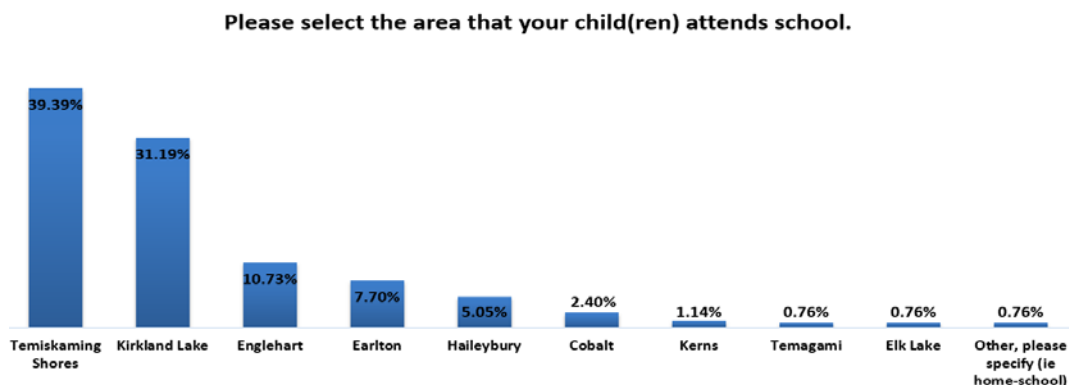
In anticipation of approval of the Pfizer (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccine by Health Canada for children aged 5 to 11, Timiskaming Health Unit developed a bilingual survey for parents and caregivers of this age group to gather local data that could be used to inform planning for the 5-11 vaccination roll-out.

This survey asked parents and caregivers about intention to vaccinate, why they would choose not to vaccinate, clinic setting preferences, clinic time preferences and how to make clinics more family friendly. The results provided local data that allowed THU to plan for clinics that met the needs of local families and identify areas for further education about COVID-19 vaccines for children.

The survey was distributed electronically through school board partners to parents of children in this age group and later promoted via social media. The survey was open from October 6 to 15, 2021.

Survey Sample

A total of 868 responses were included for analysis. Of these, 792 completed the English survey and 76 completed the French survey. The chart below depicts the geographical area where children of respondents attend school.



Summary of Survey Findings

Intention to Vaccinate

- Parents have a higher intention to vaccinate 9–11-year-olds than 5–8-year-olds.
- 48% of parent respondents in the 5-8 age range said they would NOT vaccinate their children against COVID-19, while 51% of parents of children in the 9-11 age range said they intend to vaccinate their children against COVID-19.

Vaccine Attitudes and Hesitancy

- Parents who indicated they will not vaccinate their children against COVID-19 gave a variety of reasons. The most common reasons given were that there was not enough data/research provided on the vaccine and its long-term side effects and the belief that the COVID-19 vaccine is either unnecessary or harmful for children in the 5-11 age group.

Vaccine Clinic Setting and Time Preference

- Parents ranked their vaccination setting preferences. For both age groups, appointments with their family medical practitioners were most preferred, followed by an appointment at THU. Parents of 9–11-year-olds were also comfortable with mass vaccination clinics. Least preferred options for both groups were at the local pharmacy and school-based clinics.
- The most preferred clinic time was weekday evenings (5-8pm), followed by weekdays (8:30-4:30). The least preferred option was Saturday afternoons.

Vaccine Clinic Experience

- Respondents had the opportunity to make suggestions on how to make clinics family friendly. The most common suggestions were to provide a reward post-vaccination (stickers, fun Band-Aids, treats), suggestions about the clinic setting (privacy for those getting vaccinated), and distractions (videos, music, colouring).

Knowledge to Action

Survey results were rapidly analyzed and reviewed by management and the vaccine planning team. Results were used to inform the vaccination roll-out plan for the 5-11 age group met the needs of local families. The information gathered indicated a strong preference from parents to have clinics in quieter settings. As a result, THU has partnered with local primary care to offer clinics in those settings. Additionally, THU has made changes to its mass clinics to make them less busy and more child-friendly. Increasing time between appointments allows for multiple children in the same family to be vaccinated at the same time, while also keeping clinics less busy. Visual distractions such as banners and balloons will also improve the atmosphere. Fun Band-Aids, colouring pages and stickers are other additions to the clinics that will make them more enjoyable for children. Feedback from the survey also informed how THU could address misinformation and provide education on the safety and efficacy of vaccine i.e. THU webpage ([English](#) and [French](#)), FAQ's and letter to parents via schools launching the clinics. Efforts to educate and address misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines are an ongoing effort at THU.

Next Steps

A final report of the survey findings will be completed. As part of THU's commitment to continuous quality improvement and evidence informed decision-making, a survey will be promoted at these clinics to gather feedback about the clinic experience. Data from these surveys will be quickly analyzed to identify if any changes to the clinic format are needed.