



Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society Statement on Access to COVID-19 Vaccination for Anesthesia Professionals

The Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society (CAS) is guided by its vision of leading transformative patient care through leadership, advocacy, education, patient safety and research. CAS represents 3,000 members across Canada and around the world.

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization statement ([NACIs guidance](#)) that "All **health care workers** (HCWs) should be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, since HCWs providing frontline care to patients are differentially exposed to SARS-CoV-2, and are needed to protect healthcare capacity" is welcomed and applauded by CAS. The statement continues to recommend that "Among workers in a healthcare setting, those whose work puts them at increased risk due to direct contact with patients (e.g., physical contact with patients, sustained time in patients' room), particularly those who are in direct contact with COVID-19 patients, should be prioritized during the initial vaccine availability."

CAS strongly advocates for anesthesiologists to be considered early in physician prioritization to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Anesthesiologists are the most experienced airway managers and as such, often lead COVID airway teams in acute care settings in performing intubations in severely ill COVID-19 patients who require breathing support. In addition, daily work of anesthesiologists administering general anesthesia put them at increased exposure risk because COVID-19 patients may be asymptomatic or in the incubation phase of the infection. Not only is the personal health of anesthesiologists at risk, and that of their families and teams, but also healthcare capacity.

Routine infection and prevention control measures include COVID-19 symptom screening, preoperative testing and appropriate supply and level of personal protective equipment to prevent healthcare-associated infections and outbreaks. Vaccination is one more critical part to support HCW safety. Anesthesiologists play significant roles in nearly every field of acute healthcare. In addition to providing anesthesia in the operating room, anesthesiologists administer epidural analgesia to mothers in labour, assist with resuscitation in the emergency department, and treat critically ill patients in the intensive care unit. Elective and emergency surgery and perioperative care cannot be performed without anesthesiologists.

For these reasons, CAS recommends and requests that anesthesiologists and anesthesia providers be recognized to be prioritized during the initial vaccine availability.