



# N.S. Public Health still seeing about 1,000 people daily for first dose of vaccine

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HALIFAX -- The push continues to get Nova Scotians vaccinated, with many people still coming in for their first shot.

"In the last couple of weeks, we're back to, on weekdays anyway, averaging around 1,000 people a day coming forward to start their vaccine series," said Dr. Robert Strang, Nova Scotia's chief medical officer of health.

Health officials in Nova Scotia want to have 75 per cent of the province's entire population fully vaccinated. As of Wednesday, at least 73.8 per cent of Nova Scotians are double-dosed.

know for sure and are in our system," said Strang.

"We've got around another one per cent of the military, or 1.2 percent, and then we have probably about another one per cent of people that were immunized outside of Nova Scotia in another province or the U.S. that they're working to get them entered in."

Chris Parsons, the provincial co-ordinator for the Nova Scotia Health Coalition, said the province needs to address real barriers that are preventing people from getting vaccinated.

"Sometimes that's an information barrier, but sometimes that's things like making sure people have paid time off if they suffer from side effects of the vaccine. Maybe that's making sure we're bringing vaccine to people in places

where they're congregating," said Parsons. "Right now, simply asking people to do it clearly is not working."

According to Dr. Simon Sherry, there are a number of reasons why people might hesitate or refuse a vaccine.

One reason is disinformation.

"Some people are going down the wrong rabbit hole on the internet and coming up with false or misleading information," he said.

While there are legitimate barriers, like people who have needle phobia, Sherry said there are also some conspiratorial thinkers when it comes to vaccine hesitation.

"They have some sort of idea that Bill Gates is very powerful and he's going to control them through this vaccine but the story unfolds that they have special knowledge and now they have power because they're not going to let Bill Gates control them," said Sherry. "The narrative for the conspiratorial thinker is often that they've overcome this really powerful person and they themselves have become powerful and special, part of a chosen few who know the truth about vaccines as opposed to all these silly scientists."

While the province works to get more shots into arms, Nova Scotia's top doctor said health officials are finalizing plans for booster shots for some people who had mixed doses of vaccine and those with specific medical conditions.

"We're working with both our physician and pharmacy colleagues around identifying specifically those conditions, the medications that go along with those conditions and how people that meet that criteria can start to come forward to get immunized," said Strang.