

## Services for Seniors

<b>Section</b>	Infection Prevention & Control	<b>Number</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	Services for Seniors COVID-19 Immunization Policy for Staff, Support Workers, Students and Volunteers		<b>Page: 1 of 3</b>

**PROGRAM:** *Infection Prevention and Control*

**CORE COMPONENT:** *Immunization*

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Services for Seniors is committed to creating a safe workplace that protects staff, students, and volunteers against illness and injury, including the transmission and contraction of COVID-19. This policy outlines expectations with regards to COVID-19 immunization of staff, support workers, students, and volunteers in alignment with the Minister's Directive: Long-Term Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy.

All staff, support workers, students, and volunteers are required to provide proof of first dose on or by November 15, 2021 in order to work, train or volunteer in Services for Seniors. Proof of second dose must be provided by December 13, 2021.

### **SCOPE:**

This policy applies to all staff, support workers, students, and volunteers, in Services for Seniors regardless of how often they are at the home/program and how much time they spend there.

Where a Services for Seniors position is not ever required to go into a healthcare setting (or upon approval by the Director) the Regional policy HR-007-2021 Employee COVID-19 Vaccination Policy will prevail.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**COVID-19:** COVID-19 is an acute respiratory illness caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It may be characterized by fever, cough, shortness of breath, and several other symptoms. Asymptomatic infection is also possible.

**COVID Screening:** This means the screening questionnaire that is completed before entering any Services for Senior location to screen for symptoms of COVID-19 and COVID-19 exposure.

**Fully Vaccinated:** This means having received the completed series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine, Staff is considered fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving the final dose of the series. In the event that health authorities recommend additional

doses or boosters, such doses or boosters will be considered to form part of the required series of the vaccine.

**Lab-Based Test:** This is a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test taken through a medical laboratory that detects SARS-CoV-2 genetic material and is used to diagnose an active COVID-19 infection.

**Medical Exemption:** There are very few medical reasons why a person cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19. A medical exemption must demonstrate the employee has a medical contraindication and this was assessed by an allergist or immunologist. The exemption must clearly indicate the medical reason why the individual cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19 and the effective time period for that reason.

**Rapid Antigen Test:** This is a COVID-19 test administered using a nasal swab to identify positive cases in asymptomatic individuals. This test safely yields a result within 15 minutes.

**Randomized Testing:** The testing of fully immunized individuals to be completed randomly each week as part of the homes prevention efforts of early detection of COVID-19. Randomized testing must be done weekly and cannot be done on the same day week over week.

**Staff** refers to a person who works at the LTC home/Adult Day Program as an employee of the Region, or in accordance to a contract/agreement with the Region, or in accordance with a contract/agreement between the Region and an employment agency or other third party. (i.e., Services for Seniors staff, contract staff, agency, and third party staff). This also includes any Corporate internal support department staff working in or providing services to the Long Term Care Homes and Community Programs.

**Student placement:** refers to a person working in Services for Seniors as part of a clinical placement requirement of an educational program of a college or university, who does not meet the definition of staff or volunteer.

**Support Worker** refers to persons who visit the home to provide support to critical operations of the LTC homes or to provide essential services to residents. Including but not limited to; services by regulated health providers, assistive devices vendors or home oxygen vendors, emergency services, maintenance services, food services and delivery and other mail and courier services.

**Volunteer** refers to a person who is part of the LTC home/ Adult Day Program organized volunteer program and who does not receive a wage or salary for the services or work provided for that program

**Workplace:** Any location that a Regional employee performs tasks, jobs, or projects for the Region, including Regional facilities and job sites. For the purpose of this policy, it does not include one's residence.

## **GUIDELINES:**

1. All staff, support workers, students and volunteers shall provide proof of first dose or full vaccination against COVID-19, or valid medical exemption by November 15, 2021.
2. All new staff, support workers, students and volunteers must provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19, or valid medical exemption before they begin working, undertaking a student placement or volunteering in the Long-term Care in the home.
3. If a support worker is attending the home for; an emergency or palliative situation, to provide timely medical care, or for the sole purposes of making a delivery, they are not required to provide proof of being fully vaccinated in order to be able to enter them LTC home.
4. The Minister's Directive: Long-Term Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy does not provide for exemptions on religious or conscientious grounds.
5. Staff, support workers, students or volunteers who choose not to provide proof of first dose vaccination, or proof of a valid medical exemption, by November 15, 2021 will not be able to attend a long-term care home to work, undertake a student placement or volunteer.
6. Staff who have provided only proof of first dose vaccination by November 15<sup>th</sup> will have until December 13, 2021 to provide proof of second dose.

## **PROOF OF VACCINATION:**

Staff, support workers, students and volunteers must provide proof of COVID-19 vaccine administration that satisfies one of the following:

- a. The full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada
- b. A combination of vaccines, or one or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada
- c. Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada

## **PROOF OF VALID MEDICAL EXEMPTION**

Services for Seniors understands its duty to accommodate employees who are not able to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine for a valid medical exemption.

### **Medical Exemption**

Employees seeking a Medical Exemption must:

- a) Provide written proof, using the Regions form, from an appropriately qualified physician or nurse practitioner that sets out the Medical Exemption the employee is claiming.
- b) The Medical Exemption Form can be submitted to the confidential fax number for Employee Health, Safety and Wellness (#905-825-5850) or dropped off in person at 1151 Bronte Road, in a sealed envelope addressed to Employee Health, Safety & Wellness

## **NEW HIRES**

All new staff will provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19, or valid medical exemption to Human Resources before they begin working.

Any new support workers will provide proof of full vaccination or valid medical exemption to their contract provider organization or upon entry at the screening desk.

All new students will provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19, or valid medical exemption to the appropriate representative of their academic program. The academic program representative will attest to the receipt of this to the Staff Development Coordinator prior to the student undertaking a student placement.

Life Enrichment Supervisors/Day Program staff will ensure any volunteers attending the home/program are fully vaccinated.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF NON-COMPLIANCE TO THIS POLICY**

Employees who do not comply with this policy and receive their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine by November 15, 2021 or second dose by December 13, 2021 will not be scheduled for shifts. Employees will be placed on unpaid suspension which will be considered a break in service and during this time all contributions to OMERS will cease. Health and dental benefits will cease after 30 days. As non-compliance with the new Directive is not an option, the Region will evaluate continued employment with the Region.

Support workers, students and volunteers who are not compliant to this policy will be unable to enter the LTC home or Day Programs.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

### **Services for Seniors will:**

1. Ensure staff, support workers, students and volunteers are aware of the requirements the Ministers Directive Long-Term Care COVID Immunization Policy.
2. Ensure that any staff, support worker, student placement or volunteer who is non compliant with the policy by Nov 15 does not enter the LTC home.
3. Provide a COVID-19 vaccination education program for staff, support workers, students and volunteers that addresses the following:
  - a. How vaccines work;
  - b. Vaccine safety related to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines;
  - c. The benefits of vaccination against COVID-19;
  - d. Risks of not being vaccinated against COVID-19; and
  - e. Possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccination.

### **The Managers will:**

1. Provide support to staff to ensure they receive information and education COVID-19 vaccination.
2. Collect proof of COVID-19 vaccination from staff and in cases where an employee reports a medical exemption to direct them follow the process for medical exemption and contact HR.
3. Ensure staff are aware of the consequences of not providing proof of receiving COVID-19 vaccinations or validate medical exemption by the effective date.

### **All staff will:**

1. Provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination with documentation or submit proof of a medical exemption following the Region's process for submitting a medical exemption.
2. New hires must provide proof of vaccination as a condition of hire and also bring a copy of proof of vaccination on the first day of work.
3. If approved for a medical exemption that has an expiration date, provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination within 30 days of the medical reason's expiration.
4. Complete COVID-19 vaccination education program.
5. Follow all health and safety protocols.
6. To comply with randomized antigen testing if entering the LTC home during a weekly randomized rapid antigen testing clinic.

**Human Resources will:**

1. Ensure new employees are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or provide a valid medical exemption as a condition of being hired and confirm this status with the hiring manager.
2. Be responsible for reviewing and approving documentation that supports any exemptions to this policy.
3. Provide confirmation to the Managers/Supervisors that the new hire has proof has been received.
4. Supporting the LTC homes with any consequences should staff not be complaint with this policy.

**RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING**

Staff, Support Workers, Student Placements & Volunteers must comply with Ministry surveillance testing requirements in the LTC homes.

Randomized antigen testing of fully vaccinated individuals (staff, support workers, student placements, volunteers, essential caregivers and visitors) will occur weekly at the LTC.

Those essential caregivers and visitors who are not fully vaccinated and have provided a valid medical exemption for not being vaccinated against COVID-19 will continue to require antigen testing as a regular practice.

The Region will provide for Rapid Antigen Testing.

**PRIVACY OF INFORMATION**

1. Employee medical information is being collected for the express purpose of maintaining a safe workplace, as described in section 2.0, and administering this policy.
2. Employee medical information collected under this policy will be limited to:
  - a. Proof of COVID19 Vaccination
  - b. Medical Exemption information, and
  - c. Rapid Antigen Test results and Lab-Based Test results.
3. Employee medical information will be stored in a secure location by Human Resources following existing protocols that govern the collection of

Confidential Medical Reports under the Region’s Disability Management Policies. Access to employee medical information will be restricted to employees assigned to Employee Health, Safety & Wellness.

4. Employee medical information collected under this policy will be retained for one year from the date of collection, at which point it will be destroyed. The one-year retention may be extended if an ongoing need for the information is established or if the additional retention time is required or mandated by the Province of Ontario or applicable law.
5. Services for Seniors may report, as needed, to stakeholders within the Region or to regulatory bodies in aggregate form on the total number of employees who have submitted proof of vaccination or proof of valid exemption.
6. Services for Seniors will collect, maintain, and disclose to the Ministry of Long-Term Care, at a minimum monthly basis as required as per Minister’s Directive: Long-Term Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy version 6.0 (October 1, 2021).

## REFERENCES:

Ministers Directive: Long-Term Care Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy

Minister’s Directive: Long Term Care Home Surveillance Testing and Access to Homes

Resource Guide: Minister’s Directive: Long-Term Care Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy

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