

MEMO



To: All Staff, Families and Residents

Date: October 5, 2021

From: Trisha DesLaurier CEO

RE: **Mandatory Vaccination Directive by the Ministry of Health**

As you all may have heard in the media, the Ministry of Health has made Covid19 vaccination mandatory in long term care.

While there has been steady progress provincially to get as many staff vaccinated as possible, we continue to see variability at the home level.

We all know we are now in a fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, a wave driven by the Delta variant, the predominant strain circulating in Ontario that is more transmissible and may cause more severe disease than the previous strains.

To provide the greatest protection possible to long-term care residents, the Ministry of Health is taking the next progressive step in the COVID-19 vaccination policy and related actions.

Effective immediately, every long-term care home in Ontario must ensure that all **staff, support workers, students, and volunteers** provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19 or a **valid medical exemption**. Existing staff, students and volunteers, as well as support workers who currently attend the home, must provide this proof by **November 15, 2021**.

Effective immediately, any **new** staff, support workers, students or volunteers must provide proof before they begin working, undertaking their placement or volunteering in the home.

Moving to a province-wide mandatory vaccination policy is a progressive step that many in the sector have called for, and Valley Manor is providing reasonable notice to our staff, students, support workers and volunteers to ensure that they are supported to get their first dose as soon as possible in order to meet the November 15th deadline for two doses.

Staff, support workers, students or volunteers who **choose not to provide proof** of vaccination, or proof of a valid medical exemption by the required date will not be

able to attend a long-term care home to work, undertake a student placement or volunteer.

In addition, to aid in the early detection of possible breakthrough cases, effective **October 15, 2021**, the *Minister's Directive* also will require all homes to conduct randomized testing of fully immunized individuals, at an interval to be determined by the home. Valley Manor is currently working on this policy and schedule.

What is Proof of a valid medical exemption?

There are very few medical reasons why a person cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19. As noted in the Ministry of Health's guidance on Medical Exemptions to COVID-19 Vaccination, the only valid reasons for medical exemption for mRNA vaccine are:

- a severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis to a component of a COVID-19 vaccine, or following a COVID-19 vaccine, an that allergy was documented and evaluated by an allergist/immunologist and the allergist/immunologist has determined that the individual is unable to receive any COVID-19 vaccine;
- myocarditis prior to initiating an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, if between the ages of 12-17
- myocarditis or pericarditis following a mRNA COVID-19 vaccine; or
- serious adverse event following COVID-19 immunization, if relevant specialist has determined the individual is unable to receive any COVID-19 vaccine; or
- actively receiving monoclonal antibody therapy or convalescent plasma therapy for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19 (time-limited exemption).

Proof must be provided by either a physician or a nurse practitioner (note: A nurse practitioner is a registered nurse who holds an extended certificate of registration under the Nursing Act, 1991). 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.

Valley Manor is currently refining our vaccination policy to ensure compliance with this new Ministry Directive.

For further information, please contact the Infection Control Coordinator Tina O'Malley, Director of Care Gail Yantha or myself.