

<b>Alexandra Marine &amp; General Hospital</b>	<b>MANUAL: Infection Prevention and Control</b>	Revision Date: September-2-2021
Approved by: Executive Leadership	<b>COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION POLICY</b>	Original Date: August-18-2021

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**Purpose:**

Achieving high immunization rates in healthcare facilities is part of a range of measures and actions that can help prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19. Vaccination against COVID-19 helps reduce the number of new cases, and, most importantly, severe outcomes including hospitalizations and death due to COVID-19 in clients/patients/residents and others in the healthcare environment.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the parameters and expectations related to COVID-19 immunization, including the tracking of vaccinations received, the medical exemption process for those who have a medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccines, and the education required for those declining vaccination to ensure they are making an informed decision.

This policy applies to all Alexandra Marine & General Hospital (AMGH) employees, physicians, midwives, students, and volunteers. All contractors with whom the AMGH have an agreement will be responsible for ensuring that their employees’ vaccination status are aligned with AMGH requirements.

**Policy**

All healthcare workers are strongly encouraged to be immunized against COVID-19 at the earliest possible opportunity. Healthcare workers refers to anyone working onsite at the facility for any amount of time and includes all staff, physicians, volunteers, students and contractors.

Healthcare workers MUST complete one of the following within 30 days of the implementation of this policy for current employees, or prior to their first shift for new employees:

1. Be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 AND provide proof of vaccination to Occupational Health;
  - If the individual has only received the first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccination series approved by Health Canada, provide proof of this first dose;
  - After the second dose is administered, and as soon as reasonably possible, provide proof of administration of the second dose;

OR

2. If all Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccines are medically contraindicated, provide written proof of the medical contraindication from a physician or nurse practitioner to Occupational Health;
  - The medical note should indicate that the person cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19 AND the effective timeframe for the medical restriction (permanent or time limited)

OR

3. If a healthcare worker elects not to be vaccinated at this time, or they are unsure of whether they want to be vaccinated, they are required to complete a COVID-19 vaccine educational program approved by the organization.

- If after completion of that module, the individual elects not to be vaccinated, they will be required to complete AMGH Declination Form. Should, however, they chose to be vaccinated, they must provide proof of vaccination to Occupational Health

The AMGH will maintain immunization records and documentation of completion of the educational program for each employee. Immunization status will not be disclosed unless required due to an outbreak or possible exposure to COVID-19. Immunization rates for the facility may be disclosed via aggregate data with no identifying information.

Staff, physicians, midwives and students that fail to submit documentation will be contacted directly and will not be scheduled to work until the required documentation is submitted.

### **Proof of Vaccination**

If an individual has received the COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario, the only acceptable proof of vaccination is the receipt provided by the Ministry of Health.

An individual who does not have a copy of their vaccination can download their COVID-19 vaccine receipt here: <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/>

For people who have been vaccinated outside of Ontario, acceptable proof is based on the criteria provided by the province/state in which they received their vaccine. In Ontario, local public health units will enter the required information into the Provincial database for those who have received a vaccine course outside of Ontario that has been deemed acceptable by Ontario:

[https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19\\_guidance\\_for\\_individuals\\_vaccinated\\_outside\\_of\\_ontario.pdf](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/vaccine/COVID-19_guidance_for_individuals_vaccinated_outside_of_ontario.pdf)

Other vaccine series will not be accepted in Ontario.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Education Program (To be announced)**

#### **Workplace Implications of Vaccination Status**

Those who are unvaccinated may be subject to restrictions that do not apply to vaccinated staff and the overall vaccination rate of the facility may impact the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for general activities within the healthcare setting.

Droplet Contact precautions are required - at a minimum - for all healthcare interactions with a client/patient/resident known or suspected to have COVID-19.

#### **Universal Masking and Eye Protection**

Universal Masking refers to the use of a medical mask when within 2 meters of another person in the healthcare environment. The intent of Universal Masking is to ensure the person wearing the mask does not unknowingly transmit infection to others.

Universal Masking alone does not provide sufficient protection to the wearer against acquiring infection. In order to reduce the risk of exposures to COVID-19 it is recommended that the use of eye protection (face shield, goggles, or safety glasses) be added to Universal Masking.

Healthcare workers who are not fully immunized must to continue to wear eye protection in addition to Universal Masking to reduce their risk of exposure and the risk they unknowingly transmit infection to vulnerable clients/patients/residents and their co-workers.

In the event of exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 at AMGH, healthcare workers who are immunized and those who wore full PPE (including eye protection) during the exposure will not be required to self-isolate and will not be excluded from work. This is because immunization and appropriate PPE significantly reduces the risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and spreading it to others. This will allow a continued safe level of healthcare workers to support healthcare requirements in the hospital.

In the event of exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 at AMGH, healthcare workers who have a valid medical exemption and are not immunized and those who wore full PPE (including eye protection) during the exposure will be required to self-isolate and will be excluded from work. You will be required to get a COVID-19 test at an assessment centre and remain off work until a negative test is obtained.

### **Point of Care Risk Assessment**

In accordance with Directive #1 for Health Care Providers and Health Care Entities, a point-of-care risk assessment (PCRA) must be performed by all healthcare workers prior to every healthcare interaction. When performing a PCRA, healthcare workers should consider their own risk factors in addition to the patient/client/resident risk factors when deciding on PPE. A healthcare worker who is unimmunized is at much higher risk of infection and should always choose to use eye protection to protect themselves and those around them.

### **Support for Vaccination**

Any healthcare worker unable to arrange a time to be vaccinated due to their work schedule should reach out to their supervisor for assistance in finding a suitable COVID-19 vaccine appointment.

### **Non-compliance with the policy**

Healthcare workers who do not meet the requirements set out in this policy could be subject to disciplinary action and may forego their employment/privilege rights.

Volunteers and students will not be placed in the hospital until fully immunized.

### **Confidentiality Statement**

AMGH is required, pursuant to the Chief Medical Officer of Health's Directive #6 for Public Hospitals within the meaning of the Public Hospitals Act, 1990 to report statistical information of the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) or the Ministry of Health (MOH). No identifying information will be provided to the ministry in relation to this policy; all statistical information will be provided in aggregate form.

### **Definitions**

**Additional Precautions:** Precautions (i.e., Contact Precautions, Droplet Precautions and Airborne Precautions) that are necessary in addition to Routine Practices for certain pathogens or clinical presentations. These precautions are based on the method of transmission (e.g., contact, droplet, airborne).

**Fully Immunized:** An individual  $\geq 14$  days after receiving their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series.

**Healthcare Facility:** Any location where health care is provided, including settings where emergency care is provided, hospitals, complex continuing care, rehabilitation hospitals, long-term care homes, mental health

facilities, outpatient clinics, community health centers and clinics, physician offices, dental offices, offices of other health professionals and home health care.

Healthcare Worker: Any person delivering care to a client/patient/resident. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: emergency service workers, physicians, dentists, nurses, respiratory therapists and other health professionals, personal support workers, clinical instructors, students, home health care workers, and volunteers.

Personal Protective Equipment: Personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as "PPE", is equipment and clothing worn to minimize exposure to hazards and prevent illnesses and infection to the worker. For the purposes of this document, PPE consists of a mask, gloves, gown and eye protection, and is chosen as part of personal risk assessment

Personal Risk Assessment: An evaluation of the interaction of the health care provider, the client/patient/resident and the client/patient/resident environment to assess and analyze the potential for exposure to infectious disease.

Routine Practices: The system of infection prevention and control practices recommended by the Public Health Agency of Canada to be used with all clients/patients/residents during all care to prevent and control transmission of microorganisms in all health care settings.

Reference Documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Directive #1 for Health Care Providers and Health Care Entities – Revised March 30, 2020 (or as current). <a href="https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/health_care_providers_HPPA.pdf">https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/health_care_providers_HPPA.pdf</a></li><li>2. Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC). Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Healthcare Settings, 4rd Ed. November 2012. <a href="https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/b/2012/bp-rpap-healthcare-settings.pdf?la=en">https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/b/2012/bp-rpap-healthcare-settings.pdf?la=en</a></li><li>3. Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC). Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice. (2015). <a href="https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/b/2013/bp-clinical-office-practice.pdf?la=en">https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/b/2013/bp-clinical-office-practice.pdf?la=en</a></li><li>4. Public Health Ontario. TECHNICAL BRIEF: IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19. May 2021. <a href="https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/updated-ipac-measures-covid-19.pdf?la=en">https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/updated-ipac-measures-covid-19.pdf?la=en</a></li><li>5. Public Health Ontario. FOCUS ON: Universal Mask Use in Health Care Settings and Retirement Homes. Feb 2021. <a href="https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/report-covid-19-universal-mask-use-health-care-settings.pdf?la=en">https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/report-covid-19-universal-mask-use-health-care-settings.pdf?la=en</a></li><li>6. COVID-19 <a href="#">Directive #6</a> for Public Hospitals. Issued under Section 77.7 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Issued Aug 17, 2021.</li><li>7. Resource Guide to Directive #6. August 18, 2021.</li><li>8. Public Hospitals Act</li></ol>
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	<p>9. Occupational Health and Safety Act</p> <p>10. National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI). <i>Recommendations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines. July 22, 2021.</i></p>
Acknowledgements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London Health Sciences Center, COVID-19 Immunization Policy</li> <li>• Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance, COVID-19 Immunization Policy</li> </ul>
Approval Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Leadership Team – August 2021</li> <li>• Executive and Resources Committee, August 2021</li> </ul>