

Title:	Novel Respiratory Illness Protocol – COVID 19 - Occupational Health Related - LWHA	Effective Date:	2021/09/07
Document Type:	General Policy	Revision Date:	
Section:	Infection and Control	Document Number:	N/A
Approved By:	CEO,	Last Reviewed:	2021/09/07

1.0 Policy Statement:

Listowel Wingham Hospitals Alliance (LWHA) is committed to providing a safe working environment that protects the health and safety and well-being of all persons entering LWHA.

Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health has directed Public Hospitals to develop, implement and ensure compliance with a COVID=19 vaccination policy (Directive 6). As such the purpose of the Vaccination Program Policy is to provide expectations and requirements with respect to COVID-19 and vaccination.

LWHA’s COVID-19 Vaccination policy applies to all employees, professional staff, volunteers, students and contractors.

This policy is derived from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Important Health Notices regarding COVID-19.

The intention of this policy is to prevent the transmission of any virus to patients by persons carrying on activities in the hospital.

Health care workers and their employers have a duty to actively promote, implement and comply with applicable immunization recommendations in order to decrease the risk of infection and complications in the vulnerable populations for whom they provide care. LWHA is committed to improving the health system and creating a healthier community, championing a culture of quality and safety, and supporting the health and well-being of our workers and volunteers.

It is the position of National Advisory Committee of Immunizations (NACI) that:

- Those most likely to transmit COVID-19 to those at high risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 and workers essential to maintaining the COVID-19 response, including healthcare workers, be prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The authorized COVID-19 vaccines recommended for use by NACI have been shown to be safe, as well as efficacious against symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 disease.

- Everyone in Canada should be vaccinated against COVID-19 once the vaccine is available to them.

College of Nurses of Ontario support vaccination as an evidence-based intervention and encourage nurses to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 Outbreak - Two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases (patients and/or staff) within a specified area (unit/floor/service) within a 14-day period where both cases could have reasonably acquired their infection in the hospital.

IPAC Coordinator to notify local Medical Officer of Health for all outbreaks regardless of pathogen.

Symptoms Suggestive of COVID-19:

- Fever and/or chills • cough or barking cough (croup) • shortness of breath • decrease or loss of smell or taste • fatigue and/or malaise (for adults) • nausea/vomiting, and/or diarrhea (for <18 years of age).
- Asymptomatic infection and subsequent transmission have been documented.

2.0 Responsibilities:

The hospital will:

- provide the vaccine for employees, physicians and volunteers provided it is available.
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New Hired Employees

- Must provide evidence of full vaccination status prior to first day of work. Vaccination proof will be provided to Occupational Health.

Students, Volunteers and Contractors

- It is mandatory for all students, volunteers and contractors to be fully vaccinated or they cannot be on LWHA premises.

In the case of students or contract workers, the agency/institution providing these individuals should be informed that they are responsible for appropriate education, vaccination and follow-up of their personnel.

Vaccinated Employees and Professional Staff are responsible to:

- Provide LWHA with PROOF OF COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION which include documentation of 2 doses. This information will be maintained by Occupational Health and only released if necessary in management of an outbreak

Employees and Professional Staff Electing Not to be Vaccinated:

- are required to complete an education module
- The education module includes documentation of declination.

Employees with Medical Exemption are responsible to:

provide written proof of the medical contraindication from their physician or nurse practitioner that indicates:

- That the person cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19; and the effective time period for the medical reason (i.e., permanent or time limited)

All unvaccinated staff are required to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 swab to occupational health on a frequency as determined by the hospital. This documentation will be recorded in the employee occupational health file.

Procedure:

COVID-19 OUTBREAK:

1. Employees more than 14 days since their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series are considered fully vaccinated and may continue to work without disruption.
2. Vaccination status of all employees will be provided to the employee's manager to ensure the safe management of workers/volunteers, assignments and patients.
3. A non-vaccinated worker may not be permitted to work in the outbreak area.
4. Consideration will be given to reassigning staff to a non-outbreak area.
5. Those who have are not fully vaccinated may not be permitted to work should they have a high risk contact with a positive COVID-19 patient. This will be determined by Occupational Health and the Outbreak Management Team. Vaccinated staff may continue to work without interruption.
6. Public Health may provide additional restrictions and/or limitations at the time based on local transmission.

EMPLOYEES WITH SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED ACUTE DISEASE:

All staff reporting COVID-19 symptoms must be tested for COVID-19 before returning to the workplace. Confirmed COVID-19 cases will be managed according to Public Health Guidelines. This guidance includes both vaccinated and unvaccinated staff.

REPORTING:

Occupationally acquired illnesses are reportable by occupational health coordinator or designate to the Ministry of Labour and Workplace Safety Insurance Board.

All suspect and confirmed outbreaks must be reported by Occupational Health IPAC Coordinator to the local Medical Officer of Health.

EVALUATION:

Healthcare workers immunization rates are considered a corporate patient safety indicator and will be reported by Occupational Health IPAC Coordinator to the Infection Prevention and Control Committee, Joint Health and Safety Committee and Leadership Team.

NON-COMPLIANCE

- Failure to comply with the COVID-19 program and/or providing fraudulent information may result in discipline up to, and including, termination of employment or revocation of privileges.

3.0 General Information:

- Future amendments of the policy may be required as the COVID-19 situation evolves. Operational requirements of the hospital may necessitate a review or update of the policy in order to maintain hospital operations.
- This policy will be applied in accordance with applicable legislation

4.0 References:

Ministers Directive: Long Term Care Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy, effective July 1, 2021

Ministry of Health (MOH). Case and Contact Management Resources

National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). COVID-19. Retrieved July 28, 2021 from <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on->

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College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO). Retrieved July 28, 2021 from <https://www.cno.org/en/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination-information/>

Best Practices for Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks in Acute Care Settings - March 2021. Retrieved July 28, 2021 from <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/2021/03/covid-19-pidac-outbreaks-acute-care.pdf?la=en>

COVID-19 Directive #6 – date of issuance August 17, 2021. Retrieved August 24 from https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/directives/vaccination_policy_in_health_settings.pdf