

Government Announces Mandatory Policy for Vaccinations for Hospitals, Home and Community Care Providers, and Paramedics, and Third Doses for LTC and Highest-Risk Retirement Homes

August 17, 2021

Today, the provincial government [announced](#) that it will be making COVID-19 vaccination policies mandatory in high-risk settings where the risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 and the Delta variant is higher. It does not appear that there are any changes or impacts on the current vaccination policy in place in the LTC sector. We were pleased to see that the government also announced they will be providing third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to vulnerable populations.

Vaccine Policy

The Chief Medical Officer of Health's directive mandates that hospitals and home and community care providers implement a COVID-19 vaccination policy for their employees, staff, contractors, students and volunteers. We received confirmation from the Ministry that this will include assisted living in supportive housing for frail seniors. The directive will also apply to ambulance services for paramedics. The directive has not yet been released, and we will share details as soon as they are available.

Similar to the [immunization policy in LTC](#), under this directive, individuals will be required to provide proof of one of three things:

- Full vaccination against COVID-19; OR
- A medical reason for not being vaccinated; OR
- Completion of a COVID-19 vaccination educational session.

Individuals who do not provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 will be required to undertake regular antigen testing. The vaccination policy must be effective no later than September 7, 2021.

The announcement also indicates that vaccination policies will be implemented in other higher-risk settings such as licensed retirement homes. We are awaiting further information as to what those policies would include, and will share with you as soon as it is available.

Similar to the LTC immunization policy, today's announcement requires certain providers to have a vaccination policy in place, but this is not the same as mandatory vaccinations.

We will [continue to advocate](#) to the provincial government to require vaccinations for healthcare workers in all settings, including LTC, retirement homes and assisted living in supportive housing. This evening, CEO Lisa Levin released the following statement to the media:

“While we applaud the government for moving towards a vaccination policy today for high-risk settings and for implementing third doses for long-term care and some retirement homes, AdvantAge Ontario is very concerned the policy gives workers the ability to opt-out of the new requirement by simply completing an education session.

Given the rise of infections, and the increasing prevalence of the Delta Variant, vaccinations must be truly mandatory for all health care workers, with only medical or religious exemptions being accepted. This is similar to the approach being taken by other jurisdictions like British Columbia, and should be followed by Ontario.

We must learn lessons from previous waves, and do everything we can to prevent new outbreaks and keep residents safe. Government should start today, by making vaccinations a condition of employment for all health care workers.”

Third Doses

We were pleased to see that government listened to our advocacy – third doses will be offered to high-risk congregate settings such as LTC homes, higher-risk licensed retirement homes and First Nations elder care lodges. Locations and timing for third doses will vary by public health unit and high-risk population based on local planning and considerations, with some beginning as early as this week where opportunities exist.

We are advocating for assisted living in supportive housing for frail seniors to be included as one of the high-risk congregate settings that will receive third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Resident Engagement Sessions – LTC Quality Framework: Registration Extended to August 20

As noted in the MLTC Staffing Strategy, the MLTC is developing a Quality Framework and is currently working with OARC and FCO on resident engagement. We shared details of the framework and sessions in last week's Executive Report, and the MLTC has now provided us with an invitation which is available in [English](#) and [French](#). We would like to note that the registration date has been extended to August 20, 2021. Interested residents can register for these sessions through this [link](#). If you have any questions, please send an email to ramona.muneswar@ontario.ca.

[Lisa Levin](#)
CEO

The content of this communication is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be relied upon as professional or legal advice or opinion.

Thank You
Corporate
Partners

ARJO

COMPLETE™
AN AVENIRA GROUP COMPANY

Staffy



64 Jardin Drive, Unit 3B, Concord, ON L4K 3P3