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1.0 INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that emerged in December 2019. The virus is released into the air when an infected individual breathes, coughs, sneezes etc. In some cases, infected individuals do not have any symptoms. Symptoms begin within two to 14 days of exposure to the virus. A person infected with COVID-19 is considered contagious starting from 48 hours prior to symptoms onset until 10 to 20 days depending on the severity of their illness and their immune system.

Multiple variants (genetic mutations in the SARS-CoV-2 virus) have been identified and some of these are known as variants of concern (VOCs) when they are found to be highly transmissible and infectious.

Although COVID-19 can affect anyone, certain populations are at increased risk such as those with preexisting medical conditions. The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant social and economic impacts as well as causing morbidity and mortality around the world.

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways to control transmission along with other public health measures. Currently, there are four authorized vaccines in Canada: Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID19 vaccine. All COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective against symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 in clinical trials. Furthermore, all the authorized COVID-19 vaccines in Canada have been shown to be effective in preventing severe disease, hospitalization and death.

While most clinical trial evidence was established before the emergence of VOCs, real world data continues to support the efficacy of vaccines, especially when it comes to preventing severe disease. There has been reduced vaccine efficacy demonstrated with Omicron when it comes to preventing infection in general, however booster doses have been shown to improve immunity and prevent Omicron infection in the short term. In healthcare workers, a full vaccination series will continue to be important to ensuring their health and safety, and will

serve as a foundation for booster doses if they continue to be recommended in the future to prevent transmission of emerging VOCs.

Vaccination will remain one of the cornerstone interventions for our ongoing protection against COVID-19. The Chief Medical Officer of Health recommends all Health care workers as well as all Ontarians to remain up-to-date in their COVID-19 vaccines, and to receive all doses, including additional doses, that are recommended as soon as they are eligible.

2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to outline the procedure and vaccination requirements for Unity Health Toronto employees, credentialed staff, contractors, researchers, students and volunteers of the COVID-19 vaccination requirements.

3.0 APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Unity Health Toronto employees, credentialed staff, researchers, contractors, students and volunteers who are working or may be required to report on site. For the purpose of this policy only, reference to "Covered Individuals" shall also be read to include all employees, physicians, researchers, contractors, students and volunteers.

4.0 POLICY

In keeping with our Mission and Values, Unity Health Toronto prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of our patients and all persons who provide service to our organization. Utilizing the best available evidence, we are committed to ensuring the highest standard of care for the patients and communities we serve. We are further committed to taking every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the health and safety of all Covered Individuals from the hazards of COVID-19. Vaccination is a key element in the protection of Covered Individuals against the hazard of COVID-19. This policy is designed to maximize COVID-19 vaccination rates among Unity Health Toronto Covered Individuals as one of the critical control measures to prevent serious disease, hospitalization, morbidity resulting from COVID-19 for patients, families, employees, physicians, volunteers and learners.

Employees and Physicians joining Unity Health are required to provide evidence to support that they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as a condition of employment or obtaining privileges at Unity Health Toronto. Such evidence must be furnished in advance of the start date with Unity Health and failure to provide the required documentation will be grounds for a delay of the start date or revocation of the offer of employment or engagement.

5.0 DEFINITIONS

Term/Acronym	Definition
Full Vaccination	Having received the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine or combination of COVID-19 vaccines approved by WHO (e.g. two doses of a two-dose vaccine series, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series; and having received the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago.
Contractor	Any businesses or entities operating on Unity Health Toronto sites.
Covered Individuals	All employees, credentialed staff (physicians, dentists and midwives) researchers, volunteers, students, contractors.

6.0 PROCEDURE

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements

All Unity Health Covered Individuals are required to be fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine series by November 4, 2021.

For a two dose vaccine series, to comply with this policy Covered Individuals must receive one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by October 4, 2021 and the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by November 4, 2021.

For a single dose vaccine series (e.g. Johnson and Johnson), to comply with this policy, Covered Individuals must receive the dose by October 4, 2021.

As outlined by the Federal Government of Canada for vaccines that are not Health Canada approved, an additional dose of a mRNA vaccine will be required by October 4, 2021.

6.1 EMPLOYEES AND CREDENTIALLED STAFF

Validation COVID-19 Vaccination Data

For the period of August 25 to August 31, 2021 Leaders provided letters to employees and credentialed staff for whom Unity Health did not have record of full vaccination information. Employees and credentialed staff with unknown full vaccination status were required to provide proof of full vaccination to Corporate/Occupational Health by September 2, 2021.

Effective February 14, 2022, all employees and credentialed staff are required to confirm whether they have completed a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Employees and credentialed staff who have completed a third dose are required to provide documentation of third dose vaccination to Corporate/Occupational Health by March 18, 2022. For clarity, a third dose of a

COVID-19 vaccine is not currently mandated for any Covered Individuals however this is subject to change.

Testing

All employees and credentialed staff who do not provide proof of full vaccination, or who have a valid exemption, by September 7, 2021 and will be present at any Unity Health site, will be required to perform regular antigen point of care testing starting September 7, 2021. The interval of testing will be established by Unity Health Toronto and must be at a minimum of once every seven (7) days on an ongoing basis. As of September 7, 2021 the testing interval will be two (2) times per week.

Testing will be provided by Unity Health Toronto for employees, researchers, credentialed staff, and students who are not fully vaccinated prior to November 4, 2021 and who thereafter remain unvaccinated with a valid exemption confirmed by Corporate Health, Safety and Wellness or Human Resources as applicable.

Education

All Covered Individuals who have not provided proof of full vaccination and those with a valid exemption will be required to complete the LMS module titled "COVID-19 Vaccination Module" within the designated timelines.

New Employees

In order to be eligible to work at Unity Health Toronto all candidates for employment must be fully vaccinated in accordance with this policy. All applicants for employment will be required to attest at the time that they submit their application that they are fully vaccinated or that they have a medical or Human Rights exception that must be accommodated. It will be a condition of employment for all employees to be fully vaccinated and to furnish such evidence to Corporate Health, Safety and Wellness in advance of their first day of work. Failure to meet this condition as a new employee will be grounds for termination with cause or revocation of the original offer of employment.

Proof of Vaccination

Proof of vaccination means documentation verifying receipt of a vaccination series approved by Health Canada or the World Health Organization. Employees and credentialed staff must disclose their vaccination status to Corporate Health, Safety and Wellness with the established process completed no later than November 4, 2021. Any employee newly hired by Unity Health will be required to furnish their proof of vaccination to Corporate Health, Safety and Wellness in advance of their first day worked. Providing proof of vaccination will be a condition of employment for all new employees and no employee may start working at Unity Health without having first furnished such proof.

Exemptions

Employees who are not able to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine due to contraindications for medical reasons must provide Corporate Health, Safety and Wellness with written proof of the medical reason(s), provided by a physician or registered nurse in the extended class that set out: (i) a documented medical reason for not being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and (ii) the effective time-period for the medical reason.

Credentialed staff who wish to submit a medical exemption request with respect to COVID-19 vaccination must provide the Medical Affairs office with written proof of the valid exemption as outlined above.

Based on the information received additional information or clarification may be required on a case by case basis in an effort to substantiate the request for accommodation. Employees and credentialed staff must re-submit medical documentation for review when the effective time period of the medical reason is over.

For any other form of accommodation under the Ontario Human Rights Code, outside of disability/medical condition, employees must inform their manager and human resources; and credentialed staff must inform their Chief of Department and Medical Affairs. Human Resources/Medical Affairs will require evidence appropriate to the type of accommodation and will work with the employee/credentialed staff to determine the appropriate accommodation, if required.

Those Covered Individuals with a valid exemption to COVID-19 vaccination will be required to undergo regular antigen point of care testing (rapid testing) for COVID-19 until further notice. The interval of testing will be established by Unity Health Toronto and must be at a minimum of once every seven (7) days on an ongoing basis. As of September 7, 2021 the testing interval will be two (2) times per week.

Obtaining COVID-19 Vaccination

Vaccination may be obtained at your community vaccination locations. After receiving a vaccination at either Unity Health Toronto or at a location within the community please submit proof of your COVID-19 vaccination via:

- Email to Corporate.Health@unityhealth.to; or
- In person to the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellness Department.
- access to COVID-19 vaccine receipts are available through the provincial portal (<https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/>). A green health card, date of birth and postal code are required. For those who do not have a green health card OR the provincial system is not pulling up your information, please contact the Ministry of Health health-care provider helpline at 1-866-212-2272.

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination must be from the following providers:

- Ontario Ministry of Health, Proof of Vaccination Certificate with QR code; **OR**
- Out of province proof of vaccination certificate with QR code (as long as it scans green on the Verify Ontario app)

All proof of vaccination will be verified using the Verify Ontario app and obtain a green response indicating a pass.

For international or out of province vaccination documents not listed above contact your local Public Health Unit using the following link: Ministry of Health, Proof of COVID Vaccination <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/proof-covid-19-vaccination> to obtain an Ontario COVID-19 Proof of Vaccination Certificate.

Compliance

Failure to provide evidence of at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccination being received by October 4, 2021 or subsequent failure to provide evidence of full vaccination by November 4, 2021 without a valid exemption as determined by Corporate Health, Safety and Wellness or Human Resources/Medical Affairs will mean that the employee or credentialed staff has failed to make themselves fit for work as required as a condition of their employment or engagement. As a result employees will be placed on a temporary unpaid leave of absence and credentialed staff will be placed on a leave of absence.

Ongoing failure to comply with this policy will result in the following:

- a) For employees, failure to obtain a second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series by **January 17, 2022** without an approved exemption will result in termination of employment for cause;
- b) For credentialed staff and other persons working under privilege arrangements, failure to obtain a second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series by **January 17, 2022** without an approved exemption, will result in commencing the process to proceed with termination of privileges;
- c) In the case of all other breaches of this policy, employees or credentialed staff may be subject to discipline up to and including termination of engagement, privileges or termination of employment for cause.

Prior to **January 17, 2022**, Unity Health may implement measures to support the expeditious return to work of employees or credentialed staff who were initially non-compliant with the vaccination requirements and timelines outlined in section 6.0 Procedure, and who subsequently obtain a first dose of a two-dose vaccine series with a commitment to complete their second dose within eight (8) weeks of their first dose, or for those who obtain a second

dose (or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series), but require additional time to meet the definition of full vaccination status.

For clarity, employees and credentialed staff who have not completed a second dose of a two-dose vaccine series or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series by **January 17, 2022** will be subject to the termination provisions outlined in item a) and b) above.

Employees on Leave of Absence

All employees on a leave of absence will be notified of this policy and the requirement for all active staff to be fully vaccinated and to provide evidence of full vaccination status to the Corporate Health, Safety and Wellness Department. Any staff who is on an approved leave of absence for reasons unrelated to the administration of this policy, is required to submit proof of their obtaining full vaccination status to the Corporate, Health, Safety and Wellness department in advance of returning to the work from their leave of absence. No approved leave of absence may be extended for the sole reason that the employee has failed to become fully vaccinated.

6.2 CONTRACTORS

All contractors will be held accountable for ensuring their employees or representatives who perform work at any of Unity Health sites are fully vaccinated by November 4, 2021 and meet the provisions outlined in this policy.

Contractors will be responsible for the implementation and management of compliance to this policy including, but not limited to, proof of vaccination, COVID-19 vaccination for their employees, medical exemptions, educational session on the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination and rapid antigen testing provisions. Contractors will confirm vaccination status and maintain record to ensure that their employees and agents who attend on site at Unity Health Toronto premises are fully vaccinated or have a valid exemption and have received testing within two (2) days of attending on site at Unity Health Toronto premises.

Contractors will be responsible for the collection, maintenance and disclosure of statistical data related to vaccination as required by Unity Health for the administration of this policy. This information will be made available to Unity Health Toronto when requested.

6.3 STUDENTS

All affiliated academic institutions are accountable for ensuring all learning placements at any of Unity Health Toronto site are fully vaccinated and meet the provisions outlined in this policy prior to commencement of their placement.

Affiliated academic institutions will be responsible for the implementation and management of compliance to this policy including, but not limited to, capturing proof of vaccination, COVID-19 vaccination, medical exemptions, educational session on the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination and rapid antigen testing provisions. Students will disclose their vaccination status to their

affiliated academic institution, which will confirm to Unity health Toronto that only students who are fully vaccinated are permitted to attend on site at Unity Health Toronto premises.

Rapid antigen testing may be made available to students for valid medical exemptions only. Affiliated academic institutions will be responsible for the collection, maintenance and disclosure of statistical data as required by this policy. This information will be made available to Unity Health Toronto when requested.

6.4 VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers who are volunteering at any Unity Health Toronto site are required to be fully vaccinated prior to commencement of their placement.

7.0 REFERENCES

National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), February 2022

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-26-covid-19-vaccine.html>

Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), 2021

<https://www.cna-aiic.ca/en/coronavirus-disease/covid-19-vaccinations>

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, July 2021

[https://rnao.ca/sites/default/files/2021-](https://rnao.ca/sites/default/files/2021-07/RNAO%27s%20Open%20Letter%20to%20Premier%20Hon.%20Doug%20Ford%20re%20Mandatory%20Vaccination%20for%20H%20CW%20July%2020%2C%202021.pdf)

[07/RNAO%27s Open Letter to Premier Hon. Doug Ford re Mandatory Vaccination for H
CW July 20%2C 2021.pdf](https://rnao.ca/sites/default/files/2021-07/RNAO%27s%20Open%20Letter%20to%20Premier%20Hon.%20Doug%20Ford%20re%20Mandatory%20Vaccination%20for%20H%20CW%20July%2020%2C%202021.pdf)

Government of Canada, August 2021

[COVID-19: Recommendations for those vaccinated with vaccines not authorized by Health Canada for those staying in Canada to live, work or study - Canada.ca](#)

Version	Approval/Sub-approval body	Approval date
01	Executive Committee (EC) Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC) Medical Advisory Committee (MAC)	September 3, 2021
02	Executive Committee (EC)	October 27, 2021 (Nov 9, 2021 Version)
03	Legislative Update for LTC	November 15, 2021
04	Legislative Update for LTC	January 9, 2022
05	Legislative Update for LTC	January 31, 2022
06	Executive Committee (EC)--Requirement to Disclose Third Dose Status	February 16, 2022
07	Executive Committee (EC)- Revocation of 3 rd Dose Requirement for HOP staff aligned with Ministry Directive changes	March 23, 2022

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