

Policy & Procedure Manual

**COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION –
EMPLOYEES & ESSENTIAL VISITORS**

POLICY:

OPTIONS NORTHWEST strongly encourages all Employees and Visitors to receive the COVID-19 vaccination and expects Employees, including Students, Volunteers and Essential Visitors who provide direct support or work in an area where direct support is provided to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Policy is to reduce the risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace by providing occupational protection to all employees and thereby preventing exposure to the people we support. Vaccination for COVID-19 is both safe and effective in preventing COVID-19. This Policy has been developed in consultation with OPTIONS NORTHWEST Pandemic Team as a reasonable and necessary measure to prevent, respond to, and alleviate the outbreak of COVID-19 and the associated risk to the people we support, many of whom are medically fragile and/or cannot comply with social distancing and infectious disease transmission prevention protocols.

This Policy also reflects our obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) to take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances to protect a worker and to comply with our obligation under applicable emergency orders (O. Reg 177/20 and O. Reg. 121/20) and current Public Health advice/recommendations.

This Policy is based on the significant risk factors for COVID-19 infection that are present in OPTIONS' workplaces given the nature of support and as described in Ontario's Response Framework including close contact, closed spaces, crowded places, forceful exhalation, and prolonged exposure, with the most serious risk factor being close contact. This Policy will be updated regularly to reflect any changes in the degree of risk and any advice or recommendations from public health authorities.

PROCEDURE:

A. Proof of Immunization and/or Consideration for Accommodation - Prospective Employees

1. Prior to their employment start date a Prospective Employee will be expected to produce satisfactory proof of COVID-19 vaccination (first dose and confirmation of appointment date for second dose). If this is not possible; a determination will be made as to their employment which may include withdrawal of the offer. The following will be taken into consideration:

1.1. Proof of vaccination is not possible, or start date does not allow for vaccination prior, and proof will be provided subsequently; or

1.2. Documentation to substantiate a medical reason for not being vaccinated is provided for consideration for accommodation, including specification of the effective time period for the medical reason. If time limited, the note should indicate how long it is expected to last.

2. Confirmation by the Prospective Employee that the first and/or second dose has been received.

B. Proof of Immunization and/or Accommodation - Existing Employees

1. Upon issue of this Policy, and with due regard for availability of the COVID-19 vaccine, Existing Employees will be expected to provide proof of vaccination to the Health and Safety Coordinator.

2. OPTIONS will provide accommodation to the point of undue hardship, to Existing Employees who are unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons or choose to not be vaccinated.

C. Proof of Immunization and/or Consideration for Accommodation - Essential Visitors (excluding family)

1. As part of scheduling an appointment or visit, the OPTIONS Supervisor will alert the Essential Visitor that they will be asked as part of screening if they have been vaccinated prior to entry to an OPTIONS residence or other OPTIONS premise.

2. For any Essential Visitor who identifies that they have not been vaccinated, either as part of visit scheduling or at the point of on-site screening, the site Supervisor along with the Health and Safety Coordinator will assess whether accommodation is required and/or possible.

VACCINATION OPPORTUNITIES

OPTIONS employees who can schedule an appointment at any hosted vaccination clinic or at an offsite vaccination clinic during a scheduled shift are expected to work collaboratively with their supervisor/manager to schedule appropriate time to receive the vaccination(s).

REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING

All records about COVID-19 vaccinations and accommodations for OPTIONS Employees (Existing and Prospective) will only be collected, used, or disclosed as may be necessary for legitimate operational purposes or as directed or requested by governmental authorities. All records will be kept in a secure manner consistent with OPTIONS's privacy policies and practices.

DEFINITIONS:

All OPTIONS NORTHWEST employees (full-time, part-time, relief and/or contract), Volunteers, Students, and any person who performs work for OPTIONS are considered employees.

Essential Visitors include third-party contractors, healthcare providers, and other visitors with a specific purpose for individuals served or their environment (e.g., cleaning, maintenance).

Fully Vaccinated means that 14 or more days have passed after receiving the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series. Proof of vaccination is required.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

1. Expectation of Vaccination

1.1 OPTIONS expects all **Employees and Essential Visitors** who provide support or work in an area where individuals are supported to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as per Ministry of Health standards. This is necessary given the extreme risk associated with COVID-19 and is designed to keep all Employees and the people we support safe and healthy.

1.2 During the recruitment process, Prospective Employees will be informed that anyone applying to be an Employee will be asked to show proof of vaccination against COVID-19 as a condition for hire/placement. As part of induction, Prospective

Employees will be expected to provide a copy of their Ministry of Health receipt as proof of COVID-19 vaccination, at a minimum, dose 1 with a commitment to receive dose 2 unless extenuating circumstances exist. In the case of vaccination obtained outside of Ontario, satisfactory documentation should include the date, location, type of vaccine and name of authorized administrator/agency.

1.3 Existing Employees must submit a copy of their Ministry of Health vaccination record to the Health and Safety Coordinator including the dates of vaccination (dose 1 and dose 2, where applicable) against COVID-19. Existing Employees are encouraged to download a copy of their Ministry of Health COVID-19 vaccination record if they are unable to locate the original. In the case of vaccination obtained outside of Ontario, or equivalent satisfactory documentation should include the date, location, type of vaccine administered and name of authorized administrator/agency. The link to download the vaccination record is <https://covid19.ontariohealth.ca>

1.4 Essential Visitors who provide direct support or work in an area where direct support is provided will be asked to attest to being fully vaccinated. As part of Active Screening, Essential Visitors will be asked if they have been vaccinated prior to entry to an OPTIONS residence or other OPTIONS premise.

1.5 Employing Agencies contracted to provide personal support employment services to OPTIONS, as outlined in their contract, will ensure agency employees are fully vaccinated before providing service.

2. Accommodation

2.1 OPTIONS will comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and provide accommodation up to the point of undue hardship to the organization to any Prospective Employee, Existing Employee and Essential Visitor who is unable to be vaccinated for a substantiated medical reason.

2.2 Existing employees who fail to submit proof of vaccination will be considered not vaccinated.

3. Failure to show proof of Vaccination

3.1 Failure to submit proof of Vaccination will result in the employee to be considered “unvaccinated” and subject to enhanced screening and additional precautionary measures including, but not limited to:

- be subject to Rapid Antigen Testing and show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result at a minimum 1 time per week, dependent on shift/visitation schedule;

- prevented from working in a location that is experiencing an outbreak until the outbreak is declared over by Public Health; and
- unvaccinated employees may be restricted from working in high-risk environments and/or limited to working in one location or cluster within OPTIONS and/or one employer within the Developmental Services Sector for the duration of the Pandemic.

3.2 High-risk environments include situations such as:

- A risk of exposure to other unvaccinated people and/or people who are positive with COVID-19
- Any area currently experiencing an outbreak.

4. Testing

Employees who have chosen not to receive the Covid-19 Vaccine for medical or other reason will be required to show proof of a negative Rapid Antigen Test result at a minimum of once every 7 days.

- Employees that have a medical reason to not be vaccinated will be reimbursed for the cost of the Rapid Antigen Test.
- Employees that do not have a medical reason to be unvaccinated will not be reimbursed for the cost of the Rapid Antigen Test.
- Employees that are tested must show proof of the test results to the Director of Human Resources.
- Failure to be tested will result in an unpaid leave with OPTIONS NORTHWEST.
- Any production of a fake test result will result in termination of employment.

RECOMMENDED BY: Director, Human Resources **APPENDICES:** 0

OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Community Services (all), Students, Volunteers

ORIGINAL POLICY DATE: September 13, 2021

AUTHORIZED BY: Director, Human Resources **SIGNATURE:**

