

PEMBROKE REGIONAL HOSPITAL

MEMO

TO: All Staff and Physicians

FROM: Senior Leadership Team

DATE: September 2nd, 2021

SUBJECT: **Mandatory Vaccination Policy**

Since the start of the pandemic, we have been tested and challenged in every aspect of our lives. With the fourth wave upon us, we face another challenge. There are still individuals in our community who cannot be vaccinated due to their age and medical conditions – a significant risk to our community as the Delta variant spreads. As a health care organization, Pembroke Regional Hospital (PRH) has a duty and commitment to protect the health and safety of our staff, patients and visitors and getting vaccinated remains the most effective way to keep everyone safe.

Pembroke Regional Hospital will now require all staff, physicians, learners, contractors and volunteers to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This is an important step to ensure the safety of everyone in the hospital environment.

This was not an easy choice. But we provide care to some of the most vulnerable people in the region, so it is the right thing to do. Patients and caregivers shouldn't have to worry about the vaccination status of the people around them when they access our care. You, as a valued member of the team, also should not have to worry about this as you do your work. It is part of our commitment to each other and the people we serve in our community.

There are many reasons why a comprehensive vaccination policy is important. The main factors that contributed to this decision are:

- The science is indisputable: vaccination against COVID-19 is safe and reduces the risks of severe illness, hospitalization, and death.
- The Delta variant is significantly more contagious and now accounts for 90% of cases in Ontario. This has changed the dynamic of the pandemic significantly.
- We have now entered our fourth wave and are seeing the number of cases increase.
- We care for some of the most vulnerable and medically complex people in the region. We have a moral obligation to do everything we can to protect the people we serve.

- Children under the age of 12 will be heading back to school shortly, but do not yet have the protection provided by the vaccine.

PRH is taking a phased approach for the remainder of staff and physicians that are not vaccinated. This means, PRH will require everyone to receive a first dose of vaccine or schedule an appointment for a first dose no later than **September 7th, 2021**, as outlined in the government directive, and their second dose by **October 15th, 2021**.

What this means:

- Effective **Tuesday, September 7th, 2021**, vaccination will be required for everyone who works at PRH, regardless of your role.
- We expect every member of PRH to be fully vaccinated by **Friday, October 15th, 2021** with the exception of those with a documented medical or approved human rights exemption.
- Everyone must provide documented proof of both doses of vaccination to the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Department by email OccHealth@pemregghos.org or in person.
- Anyone who has not provided proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 to the OHS Department as of September 7th must complete routine rapid antigen testing at home and random PCR testing on site may be required. As well, anyone who remains unvaccinated for reasons other than an approved medical exemption will be required to complete mandatory education.
- For anyone who is not in compliance after accessing all the support available, all options will be considered to effectively enforce this new policy. We are still working out the details and will continue to be transparent with you about what to expect.

Mandatory Rapid Antigen Testing for Unvaccinated Health Care Workers

As of Tuesday, September 7th, 2021, staff and physicians who are unvaccinated or who have not declared their vaccination status to the Occupational Health and Safety Department must begin routine rapid antigen testing. Testing kits and directions for testing can be collected as of Friday, September 3rd, 2021, from the Occupational Health and Safety Department. Testing kits will be available for pickup Monday-Friday between the hours of 0800-1600 from the Occupational Health and Safety Department or from the Emergency Department Screening Station after hours and on holidays. Rapid antigen testing must be completed within 48-hours prior to the start of each shift. Staff and physicians are expected to attest to completion of the rapid antigen test and receipt of a negative test result prior to entry to the workplace using the PRH electronic screening application.

Support available to you:

We will do everything we can to support you in getting your COVID-19 vaccine. We understand that everyone's situation is different and we are here to help you overcome any barriers you are facing to vaccination.

If you require assistance with scheduling your COVID-19 vaccine visit <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/> or contact the OHS department (ext 8200).

If you have questions or concerns regarding this policy please contact the Occupational Health and Safety Department by email: OccHealth@pemregghos.org or phone (ext 8200).

Thank you.