

October 19, 2021

AR 193514

All Licensed Supportive Living, Long-term Care and Hospice Residents and Families

RE: Temporary Public Health Measures & Congregate Care Settings

Dear Residents and Families:

Access to support and companionship from family and friends continues to be supported as **essential** to the maintenance of resident mental and physical health and wellbeing. As residents' risk tolerance varies across these settings, proof of vaccination for families and friends will not be a provincially mandated requirement. I am however implementing some increased required measures as noted below. In addition, operators have authority¹ to implement additional site-based policies and processes for COVID-19 prevention (including requiring proof of vaccine or rapid testing) as appropriate to local context and consideration of resident preferences. Once the site-based policies and processes have been developed, they will apply to all persons entering the site.

As always, I strongly recommend and encourage that all Albertans, and especially the family and friends of residents in these settings, be fully immunized against COVID-19. This is the most important thing you can do to protect not only yourself but also residents and staff. In addition to being fully immunized, wearing a mask continuously while indoors and in resident rooms (unless a significant communication barrier is present) and staying home if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (even if mild and even if you are fully vaccinated) are critical.

If you are not fully immunized please reconsider your need to visit the resident onsite, indoors and in-person before entering the site. Those who are not fully immunized are at significantly higher risk to transmit COVID-19 to people living and working in the setting. Alternatives to onsite indoor in-person visits include, outdoor visits, virtual visits, and telephone calls.

The current public health measures applicable to these settings are outlined in CMOH Order 37-2021, including symptom screening, enhanced disinfecting and cleaning requirements and isolation when needed, continue to provide a high level of protection against COVID-19 outbreaks. As a result, we are seeing significantly smaller and more controlled outbreaks than previous waves of COVID-19.

¹ Supportive Living Accommodation Licensing Act, Nursing Homes Act

With the increased transmissibility of the delta variant we are facing in the fourth wave, I have issued additional temporary measures in [CMOH Order 49-2021](#), which requires:

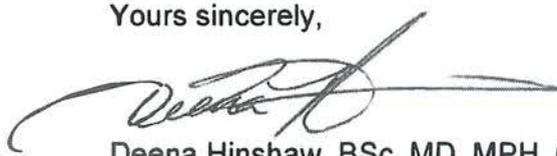
- Visiting persons in all settings to wear a mask continuously (i.e. not only in common areas) unless there is a significant communication barrier; and
- Long-term care and designated supportive living residents be tested for COVID-19 within 48 hours of hospital discharge (for new admissions from hospital and returns from hospital stays longer than 24 hours).
 - Residents must remain in their room and be placed on contact/droplet precautions in the facility until the negative test result is received.
 - This is not required for residents in other licensed supportive living setting (e.g. lodges) or hospices although some operators may implement rapid testing or other measures in these settings as an additional site-based policy and process.

Operators are required to comply with all mandatory and temporary CMOH orders. As well, some operators may implement additional site-based policies and processes for COVID-19 prevention (such as requiring proof of vaccine or rapid testing). Residents, families and friends must follow all mandatory orders and any additional site-based COVID-19 policies and processes implemented by the operator. In addition, I ask that all of you continue to remain vigilant in protecting yourselves from COVID exposure both on and offsite to lower the risk to the vulnerable members of our communities.

If you are not fully immunized, I encourage you to access accurate, science-based information to make an informed decision. Please see the [Alberta COVID-19 Vaccine Program](#) webpage for reliable information.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to your loved ones and your communities. We remain in this together.

Yours sincerely,



Deena Hinshaw, BSc, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCP
Chief Medical Officer of Health

Attachment

cc: Evan Romanow, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Service Delivery, Alberta Health

Trish Merrithew-Mercredi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health and Compliance, Alberta Health

David O'Brien, Senior Program Officer, Provincial Seniors Health and Continuing Care, Alberta Health Services



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*Office of the Minister
MLA, Red Deer-North*

Encouraging mandatory proof-of-vaccination policies for adults in schools

**To: Board Chairs of Public, Separate, Francophone and Charter School Authorities
Independent school authorities
Private ECS operators**

Today, Alberta's government announced new measures to further protect students, staff and communities—strengthening what is already in place as we face the challenges of this fourth wave of COVID-19.

It's also clear that the best way to look after each other and to stop the spread of COVID-19 is for every eligible Albertan to get vaccinated. That's why today's announcement included a renewed call to all school authorities as employers, and operators of school facilities, to develop policies that require proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test for any adult who enters a school. This would include teachers, staff and parents, but would exclude students. A school authority cannot deny their students access to education due to immunization status.

Many employers and facility owners already require their employees to submit proof of vaccination or a negative PCR test. On September 30, the Premier announced a new requirement for the Alberta Public Service to submit proof of vaccination or provide a negative PCR or rapid testing result at their own cost. The Premier also encouraged all public employers, and specifically school authorities, to introduce similar policies.

Today we're reaching out to you directly to ask that you consider this request. Taking the steps necessary to have these measures in place as soon as possible will help all of us look out for our fellow Albertans and protect our province's health care system.

Vaccines are among our best weapons to combat this pandemic, and the best way to protect children is to ensure the adults around them are vaccinated. During this critical time we must do all we can to reinforce that message—and to encourage as many Albertans as possible to get vaccinated.

Thank you for your hard work and continued efforts to keep students and staff safe.

Sincerely,

Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Education

Jason Copping
Minister of Health



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Thank you for your hard work and continued efforts to keep students and staff safe.

Sincerely,

[Original signed]

Adriana LaGrange
Minister of Education

[Original signed]

Jason Copping
Minister of Health

November 24, 2021

Dear parents and guardians:

COVID-19 continues to cause pressures on our health care system, and has challenged our work, social and recreational activities, particularly for families with young children. I know that the pandemic has impacted children in many difficult ways, and now that Health Canada has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccine made for young children aged 5 to 11 years, you may have questions about this vaccine. I want to share some information as you consider the option of immunization for your children.

In recent months, I have heard from parents who are concerned their young children have not yet been eligible for vaccine protection from COVID-19. I have also heard from parents who are worried about whether the vaccine is safe for their young children. As a parent of young children myself, I know that all of us want to make the best choices to protect our families.

What we know about the vaccines for children

Health Canada approval for younger children was based on a clinical trial involving over 3,000 young children receiving the Pfizer vaccine. This study found that vaccine efficacy (protection level) against symptomatic COVID-19 was 90.7%. This is similar to the level of protection that the vaccines provide for older children and adults. The study also showed that if immunized children did get infected, they experienced milder illness. While some children in the study experienced mild vaccine reactions like a sore arm or fever, there were no safety issues found.

Vaccine safety

Ensuring COVID-19 vaccine safety is critically important. We closely watch for reports of adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) in Alberta, the rest of Canada, and around the world. For a summary of all AEFIs in Alberta to date, you can go to the [COVID-19 statistics on vaccination](#). Adverse events do happen, but they are very rare. Of 6,796,955 doses administered in Alberta to date, across all ages, there have been 2,005 AEFIs, or 0.03%.

Informed decision making

Whether to vaccinate your children is an important choice. I encourage you to base your decision on the available evidence after weighing the benefits and risks.

Although the risk of severe disease, hospitalization and death due to COVID-19 is low for children aged 5 to 11, I hope that you will consider the following benefits of immunization:

- Vaccinating young children will protect other family members, and help prevent hospitalizations by reducing overall community transmission.
- During the fourth wave of the pandemic in Alberta, the rate of COVID-19 cases has been highest among those aged 5 to 11 years compared to other age groups. Vaccine will help protect them from getting sick with COVID-19 and reduce outbreak and personal disruptions that result in kids being home from school and other important activities.

- While serious outcomes from COVID-19 infection in children are rare, throughout the pandemic, to date there have been 78 cases hospitalized and 20 cases admitted to ICU in children age 5 to 11. Preventing infection further reduces the risk of having a serious outcome.
- COVID-19 infection can cause a rare but severe condition in children called MIS-C (multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children). In Alberta, there have been 29 cases of MIS-C linked to COVID-19 infection in children age 5 to 11. Preventing infection can reduce the risk of this outcome.
- There is still a lot we don't know about post-COVID syndrome, in children, but it is possible for children to have symptoms for months after infection, even if they don't have severe outcomes at first. Preventing infection reduces this risk.

There is a very small risk of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) associated with COVID-19 vaccines that has been seen in older children, particularly teenage males. In Alberta, there have been 23 confirmed cases of myocarditis after COVID-19 vaccination in youths aged 12 to 17 years, which works out to 9 cases per 100,000 vaccinated youths in that age group. We know that the risk of myocarditis after any infection is typically higher in the teenage population than in younger children, so it is possible that this risk after vaccine will be lower in younger children. It is also important to remember that the risk of developing myocarditis is significantly higher following COVID-19 infection than following vaccination.

How to get your child vaccinated

If you choose to get your 5 to 11 year old child vaccinated, they will be able to get their first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty) COVID-19 vaccine soon. The timing is based on vaccine arrival, so please check online for the most up to date information. Two doses are needed to be fully protected, and second doses are recommended at least eight weeks after the first dose. We also recommend that if your child is getting other vaccines in addition to COVID-19 this fall, that the spacing is at least fourteen days between the different vaccines. While in other age groups we have seen that taking other vaccines with the COVID vaccine has been safe and effective, this spacing for 5 to 11 year olds is recommended for now as a precaution in our monitoring to watch for any side effects.

When vaccine is available, you will be able to book an appointment by using the online booking tool or by calling 811. Parent or guardian consent is required for children to get their vaccine, either provided in-person or by signing a consent form, at the vaccine appointment.

Where to find more information

For more information about COVID-19, you can visit: Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, and the Government of Canada. Information in 13 other languages is also available. Please speak to your child's health care provider if you have any questions about the vaccines.

The pandemic continues to create stress for our children and families so if you need support or information about mental health and well-being, please visit the Alberta Health Services website Help in Tough Times, or you can call Health Link for information and help by dialing 811.

Whatever decision you make about vaccines for your children, I want to thank you for all you have done to keep our families and communities healthy and safe.

Sincerely,



Dr. Deena Hinshaw, BSc, MD, MPH, CCFP, FRCP
Chief Medical Officer of Health

This is Exhibit "T" referred to in the Affidavit of:

David Thomas Dickson

Sworn before me this

26th day of November, 2021

Redacted —

~~Commissioner for Oaths, Justice of the Peace,~~

~~or Notary Public for Alberta
in and for the Province of Alberta~~

~~Appointment expires 2022/02/22~~