TITLE
IMMUNIZATION OF WORKERS FOR COVID-19

OBJECTIVES
• To set out worker immunization requirements for COVID-19 to protect the health and safety of workers, patients, and the communities that Alberta Health Services (AHS) serves.

PRINCIPLES
AHS is committed to protecting the health and safety of its workers, patients, visitors, and others accessing AHS sites. Immunization against COVID-19 is the most effective means to prevent the spread of COVID-19, to prevent outbreaks in AHS facilities, to preserve workforce capacity to support the health care system, and to protect our workers, patients, visitors, and others accessing AHS sites. Immunization against COVID-19 also supports the AHS Values of Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Excellence, and Safety.

This Policy is in addition to other AHS policy documents supporting worker and patient safety during the COVID-19 pandemic including, but not limited to, the AHS Use of Masks During COVID-19 Directive, Attending Work with COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test, or Close Contact Directive, and the Fit for Work Screening (COVID-19) Protocol.

This Policy shall be reviewed regularly, and at least prior to March 31, 2022, to ensure alignment with public health measures and regulations, and to confirm it adequately covers the health and safety risks that it addresses.

APPLICABILITY
Compliance with this document is required by Alberta Health Services, Alberta Precision Laboratories, Carewest, CapitalCare, and Covenant Health employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on their behalf. Compliance requirements for other contracted service providers, such as continuing care, will be...
communicated directly to the contracted service providers. This document does not apply to physicians with community appointments.

ELEMENTS

1. **Immunization Requirements**
   
   1.1 Effective December 13, 2021, all workers must be **fully immunized** against COVID-19.
   
   1.2 A worker on an approved Leave of Absence must be fully immunized prior to returning to work.
   
   1.3 A worker hired after November 30, 2021 must be fully immunized prior to commencing work.

2. **Proof of Immunization Records**
   
   2.1 No later than November 28, 2021, workers shall disclose accurate proof of their immunization status to:
   
   a) AHS or an AHS subsidiary, if the worker is an AHS employee, medical staff, midwifery staff, or volunteer;
   
   b) Covenant Health, if the worker is a Covenant Health employee, medical staff, or volunteer;
   
   c) their educational institution, if the worker is a student or instructor; or
   
   d) their employer, if the worker is a contracted service provider.

   2.2 Proof of immunization is being collected to protect the health and safety of workers, patients, and other persons accessing AHS sites and to preserve AHS’ workforce capacity to support the health care system.

   2.3 Proof of immunization records collected under this Policy shall be securely and confidentially retained, accessed, and used as necessary to determine fit for work status of workers, to manage and administer employment and other working relationships with workers, to address accommodation requests, and to comply with all applicable laws, such as the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (Alberta) and *Regional Health Authorities Act* (Alberta).

   2.4 Proof of immunization records are collected under the authority of Section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (Alberta) and shall be used, accessed, and disclosed in accordance with the legislation and the AHS *Collection, Access, Use, and Disclosure of Information Policy*. 
3. Workplace Accommodation

3.1 Any AHS employee who is unable to be immunized due to a medical reason, or for another protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act, will be reasonably accommodated, up to the point of undue hardship, in accordance with the AHS Workplace Accommodation Policy. An AHS employee will not be permitted to undergo rapid testing as a reasonable accommodation unless Section 4 of this Policy applies.

3.2 Employees of AHS subsidiaries, Covenant Health, and applicable contracted service providers, who are unable to be immunized due to a medical reason, or for another protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act, will be reasonably accommodated, up to the point of undue hardship, in accordance with their applicable workplace accommodation policies. An employee of AHS subsidiaries, Covenant Health and applicable contracted service provider, will not be permitted to undergo rapid testing as a reasonable accommodation unless Section 4 of this Policy applies.

3.3 Any current AHS employee requesting workplace accommodation shall make a request for the accommodation as soon as reasonably possible, and no later than October 16, 2021, and provide required information in accordance with the AHS Workplace Accommodation Policy (or the appropriate accommodation policy of an AHS subsidiary or Covenant Health, if applicable).

3.4 Any current AHS member of the medical or midwifery staff who is not an employee of AHS, an AHS subsidiary, or Covenant Health, and who is unable to be immunized due to a medical reason, may request an exception as soon as reasonably possible and no later than October 16, 2021. A request for an exception shall be made on the Medical or Midwifery Staff Request for Exception COVID-19 Mandatory Immunization for Workers form and shall be submitted as directed on the form. The lack of immunization may affect the safe exercise of their Clinical Privileges as described in the Medical Staff Bylaws and Rules (Rule 3.4.4.2), or may directly impact their ability to practice and patient safety as described in the Midwifery Staff Bylaws and Rules, as applicable.

4. Rapid Testing at Facilities at Significant Risk of Service Disruption

4.1 Section 4.2 of this Policy only applies to current workers in facilities that are at a significant risk of service disruption.

a) Section 4.2 of this Policy does not apply to a worker hired after November 30, 2021 or to any worker in a facility that is not at significant risk of service disruption.

b) Facilities at significant risk of service disruption are determined by the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Operations and will be communicated to affected workers at these facilities.
4.2 Workers who are not fully immunized and are working in a facility that is at a significant risk of service disruption will be required to undergo regular rapid testing. The following conditions apply:

a) The worker must be tested using a Health Canada-approved COVID-19 test.

b) The test must be conducted at an existing private testing location (e.g., a pharmacy). Publicly-funded COVID-19 testing (e.g., through AHS) shall not be accepted.

c) The worker must have a negative test completed no more than 48 hours prior to the start of their shift.

d) The cost of the tests are at the worker’s expense, unless an approved workplace accommodation or exception (for medical or midwifery staffs) applies.

e) The testing must be completed on the worker’s own time.

f) The worker must retain proof (paper or electronic) of a negative test result and show that proof to their leader before the start of their next scheduled shift and if asked during their shift.

(i) If the worker tests positive for COVID-19, the worker must be tested for COVID-19 using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. If the PCR test is positive, the worker must isolate in accordance with applicable Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders and the AHS Attending Work with COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test, or Close Contact Directive.

g) Workers who refuse to be tested or fail to comply with these conditions shall be considered non-compliant with this Policy and subject to Section 5 of this Policy until they are fully immunized.

5. Non-Compliance

5.1 A worker is considered to be in non-compliance with this Policy if they are:

a) not working in a facility that is at a significant risk of service disruption and have not met the requirements of Sections 1-3 of this Policy; or

b) working in a facility that is at a significant risk of service disruption and have not met the requirements of Sections 1-4 of this Policy.

5.2 With respect to students, instructors, and applicable contracted service providers, failure to comply with this Policy shall result in AHS reviewing the applicable contract or other relevant circumstances and initiating further discussions with the applicable educational institution or contracted service provider and, in this
respect, AHS reserves all rights it has at law, equity, or pursuant to any applicable agreement to address such non-compliance.

5.3 In all other cases not outlined in Section 5.2 above, except where a workplace accommodation or exception (for medical or midwifery staff) applies, failure to comply with this Policy shall result in:

a) a meeting being held with the worker to discuss their concerns with vaccination against COVID-19 and provide educational materials on the COVID-19 vaccines; and

b) if the worker remains non-compliant with this Policy, the worker being placed on an unpaid leave of absence for the period of time required to become fully immunized or, in the case of medical or midwifery staff, Immediate Action being taken as set out in Part 6 of the Medical Staff Bylaws or Midwifery Staff Bylaws.

DEFINITIONS

Fully immunized means a worker:

a) who has received two doses of a vaccine considered valid by Alberta Health in a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or one dose of a vaccine considered valid by Alberta Health in a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series; and

b) for whom fourteen days have elapsed since the date on which the person received the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine considered valid by Alberta Health of a two-dose series or one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine considered valid by Alberta Health in a one-dose vaccine series.

Worker means AHS, its subsidiaries and Covenant Health employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students and instructors, volunteers, and applicable contracted service providers (including anyone providing services for AHS on behalf of an applicable contracted service provider).

REFERENCES

- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  o Attending Work with COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test, or Close Contact Directive (#1188)
  o Collection, Access, Use, and Disclosure of Information Policy (#1112)
  o Fit for Work Screening (COVID-19) Protocol (#1184-01)
  o Medical Staff Bylaws and Rules
  o Midwifery Staff Bylaws and Rules
  o Use of Masks During COVID-19 Directive (#HCS-267)
  o Workplace Accommodation Policy (#1156)
- Alberta Health Services Forms:
  o Employee Request for Accommodation Form (#19566)
  o Got My COVID-19 Immunization Form
Medical or Midwifery Staff Request for Exception COVID-19 Mandatory Immunization for Workers Form

- Alberta Health Services Resources:
  - AHS Immunization Information Insite Page
  - AHS Values

- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - Alberta Human Rights Act
  - Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (Alberta)
  - Occupational Health and Safety Act (Alberta)
  - Regional Health Authorities Act (Alberta)