

AV3100 – COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENT POLICY

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Däkelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka’pamux, Secwépemc, St’át’imc, Syilx, and T̓silhqot’in Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

Interior Health recognizes that diversity in the workplace shapes values, attitudes, expectations, perception of self and others and in turn impacts behaviors in the workplace. The dimensions of a diverse workplace includes the protected characteristics under the human rights code of: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, criminal or summary conviction unrelated to employment.

1.0 PURPOSE

On September 12, 2022, the Ministry of Health released its [Order of the Provincial Health Officer](#) mandating the vaccination of healthcare workers against COVID-19 [4]. The purpose of this policy is to align with this order and to ensure those most at risk of serious illness are optimally protected. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent serious illness and hospitalization [1]. Of note, vaccination of staff reduces the risk of transmission amongst those who are asymptomatic [3], which helps to protect patients, families and other healthcare workers.

Updates to the [Order of the Provincial Health Officer](#) (October 5, 2023) do not require booster vaccination for healthcare workers. Interior Health (IH) recognizes that waning immunity over time, effects of booster doses and vaccine effectiveness for various variants of concern should be considered. IH recommends healthcare workers follow Health Canada’s booster dose schedule.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Care	<i>Defined as health care, Personal Care and Community Care.</i>
Care Locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Hospital • Hospital facilities • A research facility or research centre associated with a Hospital or other Care Location • A provincial mental health facility • A BC Cancer Agency facility • A residential facility licensed under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act to provide one of the following types of care prescribed or described in section 2 of the Residential Care Regulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ child and youth residential

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ hospice ○ mental health ○ substance use ○ community living ○ acquired injury • An assisted living residence registered under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act in one of the following classes prescribed in section 3 of the Assisted Living Regulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ mental health ○ persons with disabilities, for adults receiving assisted living services due primarily to a disability ○ supportive recovery • A public health office • A clinic operated by Interior Health • An urgent and primary care centre • A child development centre • A community health centre • An adult day care • A laboratory facility • A diagnostic facility • A vehicle from which care is provided • A private residence in which a patient or client resides • A school • A post-secondary institution • A supervised consumption site • An overdose prevention site • A correctional facility • Another place where care is provided • Locations excluded from the application of the Public Health Order are posted on the Public Health Officer's (PHO) website.
Close Contact	Generally, someone who has been near a person with COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes when health and safety measures were not in place or were insufficient.
Community Care	Includes home nursing, nursing support for school students, health services for post-secondary students, homes support, mental health, drug and alcohol care, continuing care, crisis support, life skills coaching, counselling, day care for adults, health care provided in an office or clinic, care provided by a

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	<i>child development centre, support provided to a client of Community Living British Columbia, supervised consumption services, overdose prevention services, harm reduction services and public health services.</i>
<i>Employer</i>	<p><i>A person or organization that employs people, includes the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Interior Health (IH)</i> <i>• Other Employers providing care, services or health related research in a Care Location who are funded or contracted by either the above health authority, the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions</i> <i>• Contractors providing care, services or health-related research in a Care Location under contract to any of the above Employers</i> <i>• Boards of management of a Hospital</i> <i>• A person who provides a staff member to provide care or services to a client funded under the Choice in Support for Independent Living program, but not including the individual client or client support group funded under the Choice in Supports for Independent Living program</i>
<i>Exemption</i>	<i>A variance issued to a person under the Public Health Act on the basis of a medical deferral to vaccination, which permits a person to work despite not being Vaccinated.</i>
<i>Health Care</i>	<i>Includes anything that is done for therapeutic, preventative, palliative, rehabilitative, diagnostic, cosmetic or other purpose related to health</i>
<i>Hospital</i>	<i>An institution designated by the minister under the Hospital Act to provide acute care, extended care, convalescent care or rehabilitation care, but does not include a stand-alone extended care Hospital.</i>
<i>Operator</i>	<i>Person responsible for managing a Care Location.</i>
<i>Outside Health or Personal Care Provider</i>	<i>A physician, nurse, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, home support worker, practicum student providing Health Care or Personal Care, faculty member of a Health Care or Personal Care educational or training facility, emergency medical assistant, patient transport worker or any other non-staff member who provides Health Care or Personal Care to a client but does not include a visitor.</i>

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<i>Outside Support or Personal Service Provider</i>	<i>A volunteer, hired companion, barber, hairdresser, nail esthetician or any other non-staff member who provides personal support or a personal service to a client, but does not include a visitor.</i>
<i>Other Outside Provider</i>	<i>A person other than a resident, staff member, visitor, Outside Health Care Provider, Outside Personal Care Provider, Outside Support Provider or Outside Personal Service Provider, who is in a facility or Care Location, and includes an entertainer, animal therapy provider and maintenance person.</i>
<i>Personal Care</i>	<i>Assistance with the activities of daily living, including eating, moving about, dressing grooming, bathing and other forms of personal hygiene, and assistance with managing medication.</i>
<i>Proof of Exemption</i>	<i>Means having an Exemption certificate.</i>
<i>Proof of an Exemption Request</i>	<i>A response from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer or the Medical Health Officer that a request for reconsideration for the purpose of seeking a medical Exemption complies with the requirements of this Order.</i>
<i>Proof of Vaccination</i>	<i>A vaccine card or documented vaccination records in Health Gateway.</i>
<i>Residential Care Facility</i>	<i>A long-term care facility, a private Hospital, a stand-alone extended care Hospital or an assisted living residence for seniors.</i>
<i>Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Dietary, kitchen, housekeeping, inside maintenance services or construction work except for urgent or emergency inside maintenance services or construction work</i> • <i>Administrative or managerial services</i>
<i>Staff Member</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An individual employed by Interior Health</i> • <i>An individual who provides care, services or health related research in a Care Location under contract with Interior Health</i> • <i>An individual employed by or under contract with the board of management of a Hospital or the management of Provincial mental health facility, to provide care, series or health related research in a Hospital or a Provincial mental health facility</i> • <i>A health professional with facility privileges</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fellow or trainee, who is in a Care Location for training, research or associated administrative purposes • A person employed by, under contract with or funded by either an Employer or a contractor below to provide care, service or a health related research in a Care Location: • An Employer who is funded or contracted by IH • A contractor to an Employer listed above • A person providing care or service to a client under the Choice in Supports Independent Living program • An employee, faculty member, contractor, technical specialist, volunteer of or a researcher at a post-secondary institution who is in a Care Location for training certification, equipment assembly, research or associated administrative purposes
UnVaccinated	A person that does not meet the definition of “Vaccinated”.
Vaccinated	<p>A person who has received, at least 7 days previously, one dose of Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine or two doses of a Vaccine or combination of Vaccines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As approved for use in Canada by the department of federal government responsible for regulating drugs, or • Approved by the World Health Organization (WHO), with respect to vaccines approved by the WHO but not approved for use in Canada <p>Or, in the case of a person who has not been Vaccinated as described above, to have received the recommended dose or doses of the XBB.1.5-containing formulation of COVID-19 Vaccine approved for use by Health Canada and available in the province.</p>
Vaccine	A Vaccine intended for use in humans against the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
Vaccine Card	<p>Proof in one of the following forms that the holder is Vaccinated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic proof or a printed copy of an electronic proof <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ issued by the government in the form of a QR code, accessible through the Health Gateway online platform, and ○ showing the name of the holder.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Proof in writing, issued by the government for the purpose of showing proof of vaccination in accordance with orders of the provincial health officer made under the Public Health Act; or</i> • <i>Proof, whether electronic or in writing, issued:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>by the government of Canada or of a province of Canada, and</i> ○ <i>for the purpose of showing proof of vaccination in accordance with an order made in the exercise of a statutory power with respect to the protection of public health or the facilitation of international travel</i>
Work	<p><i>For Interior Health:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To work for the above health authority</i> • <i>To provide care services or health related research in a Care Location</i> • <i>To exercise facility privileges, or</i> • <i>To be in a Care Location for training, research or associated administrative purposes.</i> <p><i>For other Employers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To provide care, services or health related research in a Care Location, including any place where a patient, resident or client of a Care Location is being provided with care of services by a staff member or student, or</i> • <i>To provide care of services to a client of the Choice in Support for Independent Living program.</i> <p><i>For post-secondary institution students and staff members:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To be in a Care Location or residential care facility for training, certification, equipment assembly, research, or associated administrative purposes</i>

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 All staff members, students, outside health or Personal Care providers, outside support or personal service providers, and other outside providers must be Vaccinated for COVID-19 to work.
- 3.2 During an outbreak or exposure event, the following will apply:
 - any direction or guidance from the Medical Health Officer (MHO), Infection Prevention & Control (IPAC) and/or Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) and Workplace Health and Safety (WHS):
 - [Respiratory Infection Outbreak Toolkit Long Term Care Facilities](#)

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- [Acute Care Viral Respiratory Illness \(VRI\) Outbreak Guidelines](#)
- [AV1300 Staff Respiratory Infection Outbreak Policy](#)
- [Provincial Guidance on Return to Work and Exposure Management for Health Care Workers with Viral Respiratory Illness](#)
- and/or any other applicable ministerial or public health order, policy or guidance.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Staff, Students, Outside Health or Personal Care Providers, Outside Support or Personal Service Providers and Other Outside Providers

- 4.1.1 Must ensure their COVID-19 vaccination records are registered with <https://www.immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca/> including those Vaccinated outside of British Columbia.
- i. Staff members must provide their proof of vaccination or proof of [Exemption to the Employer or Operator of the Care Location upon request](#).
 - ii. All others must produce their proof of vaccination or approved [Exemption](#) as required by site process for entry into an IH facility or Care Location to provide services on behalf of IH.
- 4.1.2 Must continue to mask per the following:
- [AV1350 Influenza Prevention Policy](#).
 - Any provincial masking policy that is in effect.
 - If required to do so per the recommendation of IPAC, MHO or WHS.
- 4.1.3 All who are not Vaccinated:
- i. Will not be allowed to enter an IH facility or Care Location or provide services on behalf of Interior Health.
 - a. Exceptions:
 - i. Any person with an approved medical Exemption as outlined by [the Office of the Provincial Health Officer](#).
 - ii. Any person approved to follow preventative measures as outlined by the [Office of the Provincial Health Officer Public Health Orders](#).
 - ii. Staff members employed by IH will be placed on leave without pay and may be subject to discipline up to and including termination.
 - iii. All those not included above may be subject to cancellation of contracts or Care Location privileges.

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Staff of Contractors and Subcontractors

4.1.4 Interior Health will direct any contractor or subcontractor with employees who, in the course of their duties, enter an Interior Health facility or Care Location, to establish and enforce policies for their staff that are consistent with the requirements for staff under this Policy.

4.2 Consequences of Non-Compliance

4.2.1 Any person found in violation of this Policy may be subject to removal from the facility or Care Location, remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, cancellation of contract and/or revocation of privileges.

5.0 PRIVACY STATEMENT

5.1 All personal information collected under this Policy (“Vaccination / Exemption Data”) is collected under and in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the [Public Health Act](#) and related public health orders.

5.2 The personal information collected under this Policy is collected for the purposes of: complying with applicable PHO Orders and related public health guidance and requirements; identifying risk and preventing the workplace transmission of disease; managing outbreaks; and for related operational, employment and administrative purposes.

6.0 REFERENCES

[1] BCCDC. (2023). *About COVID-19*. <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19>

[2] Government of Canada. (2020). *Health Canada authorizes first COVID-19 vaccine*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2020/12/health-canada-authorizes-first-covid-19-vaccine0.html>

[3] Government of Canada. (2023). *Summary of evidence supporting COVID-19 public health measures*. Retrieved October 27, 2023 <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/summary-evidence-supporting-covid-19-public-health-measures.html>

[4] Provincial Health Officer. (2021). *Provincial Health Orders*. Retrieved from [COVID-19 \(Novel Coronavirus\) - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\) AVI300 Staff Respiratory Infection Outbreak Policy AVI350 Influenza Prevention Policy](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov2/health/health_services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/summary-evidence-supporting-covid-19-public-health-measures.html).

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