



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
From:	Fern Dominelli, CAO Ehren Baldauf , Human Resources Consultant
Date:	November 25 th , 2021
Re:	COVID-19 Vaccination Policy - Issue Report

Background

Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board is committed to Health & Safety of all staff and recognizes the importance of COVID-19 vaccinations. The purpose this report is to outline the parameters and expectations related to implementing a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy, including the tracking of vaccinations received, the documentation process for those who have a medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccines, and the outcomes of refusing COVID-19 vaccination.

As reported to the Board and as directed by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) under [Directive #6](#), Paramedic Services implemented a vaccine policy on September 7th, 2021, requiring Paramedics who are fully vaccinated to provide proof of vaccination by October 1st, 2021. Those who are medically exempt were to submit written proof of a medical reason provided by a physician or registered nurse and those who were electing not to be vaccinated were required to complete a self-directed educational package about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination prior declining vaccination for any reason other than a medical exemption. Since the issuance of Directive # 6, many organizations have implemented mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies where, in absence of a medical exemption, those refusing to be vaccinated by a certain date are facing leaves without pay or termination of employment.

Current State

To date, **96%** of our active Paramedic Services staff, which includes Paramedics, Community Paramedics and Patient Transportation Staff, and Paramedic management, are fully vaccinated. To date, we have had zero (0) submissions of supported medical exemptions and a total of six (6) employees (4 Full-Time and 2 Part-Time) have indicated in writing that they are opting out of COVID-19 vaccination. These 6 employees have been submitting to weekly Rapid Antigen Testing at shift commencement and inputting their results in our Operative IQ software in accordance with Directive #6 and our service's

policy. Paramedics, Community Paramedics, and our Non-Urgent Patient Transportation Staff continue to be on the front line during this global Pandemic and they remain at an elevated risk of infection. Mounting scientific evidence is demonstrating that the COVID-19 vaccines are associated with decreased asymptomatic infections and transmissions of the virus. Further, history demonstrates that vaccination (influenza, measles, mumps rubella, Hepatitis B) has proved to be effective at reducing even eliminating chances of being infected or seriously ill. Given the current and steadily increasing numbers of daily new COVID-19 infections in our District and the very real risk this virus poses to our front-line workers and our ability to manage safe staffing levels and to patients we serve, Staff have drafted a COVID-19 Vaccination Policy that would make the COVID-19 vaccines mandatory for specific DSB staff considered to be at high risk.

This Policy is congruent with recently implemented policies at the Manitoulin Health Centre and Health Sciences North. Additionally, several other organizations such as the Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board, the City of Toronto that have implemented comparable mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies.

This policy has been drafted based on the best available scientific evidence while valuing the health and safety of our staff, and the communities they serve. It has also weighed the current healthy inventory and access to vaccines in Ontario compared to earlier on in the pandemic. The timing of this policy is also in accordance with the stated position of the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs who are currently lobbying the government to make COVID-19 vaccination part of the Ambulance Service Communicable Disease Standards. These Standards already mandate Paramedic Services to ensure that Paramedics are immunized against eight (8) other contagious diseases. They are Tetanus/Diphtheria, Poliomyelitis (Polio), Pertussis, Varicella (chickenpox), Measles, Mumps, Rubella and Hepatitis B. Given that Paramedics must be immunized against these diseases to be (and remain) employed as a Paramedic in Ontario, Staff do not believe this Mandatory Policy to be an unreasonable measure at this juncture of the pandemic.

To protect vulnerable patients and staff in settings where the risk of contracting and transmitting COVID-19 and its variants are significantly elevated and congruent to the Chief Medical Officer of Health's issuance of Directive #6, staff are recommending that full COVID-19 vaccination to be mandatory for any Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB employees who hold the following positions: Paramedic Chief, Paramedic Deputy Chiefs, Paramedic Superintendents, Supervisor of Community Programs, Paramedics, Community Paramedics, Patient Transfer Attendants, Patient Transfer Personal Support Workers, Paramedic recruits and students/volunteers working with Paramedics and/or Patient Transfer Staff.

The covered individuals named above will be required to adhere to Human Resources policy C.5.08 COVID-19 Vaccinations which would become effective immediately once approved by the Board.

Pursuant to the policy, all covered staff who do not have a medical or *Human Rights Code* exemption are required to be fully vaccinated by **February 3, 2022**. Sequencing for these individuals shall be as follows;

- a. By **December 16, 2021, at 12:00 hrs**, identified non-vaccinated staff or staff who have not disclosed their vaccination status must submit proof of receiving at least the first dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine to the Deputy Chief. Failure to submit proof of the first dose will result in being placed on an unpaid leave of absence until such a time that proof of the first dose can be produced and verified.
- b. Proof of the second dose shall be submitted to the Deputy Chief by **February 3rd, 2022**, at 12:00 hrs. Should the identified employee(s) not submit proof this date, failure to submit proof of the second dose will result in being placed on an unpaid leave of absence until such a time that proof of the second dose can be produced and verified.
- c. All staff will be required to have a third dose “booster” within 60 days of the booster becoming available to identified staff included in this policy.

All other DSB employees have not been deemed as “High Risk” to be exposed to COVID-19 and are not subject to this policy.

Conclusion

Staff are recommending that the Board approve Human Resources Policy C.5.08 COVID-19 Vaccinations effective immediately.