



North York
Family Health Team

Policy Number: H&S-16

Approval Date: November 2021

Date Reviewed:

SECTION: COVID-19

SUBJECT: Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

PURPOSE:

North York Family Health Team (NYFHT) has implemented this policy to increase the protection and safety of our patients and employees by reducing the transmission of COVID-19 within the facility. All staff are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (two doses), subject to human rights exemptions (medical and religious). “Fully vaccinated” is defined as having received both doses (plus 14 days), and any related boosters. This Policy outlines the NYFHT’s expectations regarding COVID-19 immunization of staff.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees (full-time, or part-time), students, contractors, and volunteers (collectively referred to as “staff”) of the NYFHT.

STANDARDS & PROCEDURES:

New Hires

New hires will be required to present proof of vaccination verifying the dates they received the COVID-19 vaccine (two doses and any related boosters), prior to commencing employment. Exemption requests will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director.

Current staff

Current staff must provide proof they have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by [insert date that is at least two weeks from date policy is provided to staff]. Proof of the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine is required by [insert date from above, plus one month].

If the staff member is not fully vaccinated by [insert second date], they will be placed on a two week unpaid leave of absence. If they remain unvaccinated (less than two doses) by that date, the NYFHT may implement necessary actions up to and including restricting access to the workplace, placing the employee on an unpaid leave of absence, modifying their duties and responsibilities or terminating their contract of employment.

HUMAN RIGHTS EXEMPTIONS

New and current staff may apply for a medical or religious exemption from COVID-19 vaccination. Medical or religious exemptions must be approved and confirmed in writing by the Executive Director.

Medical Exemptions

Medical exemptions will require a written medical certificate from a physician or nurse practitioner (See Appendix A). It must specify:

- 1) That the physician/nurse practitioner has an independent and objective opinion that the staff member cannot receive or must delay the COVID-19 vaccination due to a medical contraindication, and
- 2) The effective time period for the medical exemption (i.e., temporary or permanent).

Religious Exemptions

Religious exemptions will require information as to why the individual is not vaccinated due to creed/religion. The individual requesting a religious exemption must provide background on the religious belief/creed and connect the religious belief/creed to the reason for the exemption. Supporting documentation published by religious leaders or others practicing the religion/creed will be requested where available. Personal and/or philosophical objections to vaccinations are not considered sufficient justification for granting an exemption.

RAPID ANTIGEN POINT OF CARE TESTING (POCT)

Unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, or exempt staff will be required to submit to rapid antigen testing and provide proof of a negative result. That person must complete regular antigen point-of-care testing for COVID-19 three times every week or within 48 hours of in-person care, and provide a negative result from those tests to their supervisor or delegate prior to providing any patient care. This can be done in the clinic or via video appointment with the supervisor or delegate. Documentation of results will be kept in the staff member's HR personnel file. Where circumstances warrant, any staff may be required to participate in rapid antigen testing.

A positive rapid antigen test must be followed up with by a PCR test to confirm diagnosis. Staff must self-isolate until a negative PCR result is available. Staff may use available vacation or personal days to cover all or a portion of a leave required due to a positive test result. If the staff member has no vacation or personal days available, the time off will be unpaid. A refusal to submit to rapid antigen or PCR testing following a positive result will result in the staff member being placed on an unpaid leave of absence until testing is undertaken. Termination of employment may also occur.

COLLECTION OF VACCINATION STATUS INFORMATION

The NYFHT's collection of data regarding staff vaccination status will be kept in the staff's personnel file and will only be used for the purposes of implementing and enforcing this Policy. NYFHT will not share staff's vaccination status with other staff, physicians or patients, without your consent. The NYFHT may share cumulative numbers with staff and others; specifically, the percentage of vaccinated staff, human rights exemptions, and/or unvaccinated staff.

IPAC AND OTHER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

All staff regardless of vaccination status will continue to adhere to organization mandated safety precautions regarding masking and other PPE, physical distancing and handwashing. However, it is possible that unvaccinated staff may be required to adhere to more stringent safety protocols than vaccinated staff. As safety restrictions are eventually lifted or reduced, the NYFHT will reassess the requirements for unvaccinated staff. For example, non-vaccinated staff may be required to continue to mask indefinitely and/or abide by physical distancing rules.

NYFHT will work with all staff to reduce the impact of health and safety protocols on the staff's working conditions as much as reasonably possible, but the health and safety of staff and patients will be the primary consideration. The NYFHT will comply with all provincial and regional public health requirements to reduce the risk of COVID-19 exposure to staff, patients and visitors. Due to the nature of the virus and despite taking all reasonable precautions, the NYFHT cannot guarantee zero risk of exposure to COVID 19 while on the organization's premises.

RESPONSIBILITY

This Policy has been developed and approved by the Board of Directors. The Executive Director has been granted the authority to enforce this Policy.

DURATION AND REVIEW

COVID-19 is an ongoing concern. The organization may update and revise this policy at any time, without notice. This Policy is in effect until such time as the organization chooses to discontinue it.

Executive Director

Educational Resources

Covid-19 vaccination in Canada: An education series for primary care professionals created by Family & Community Medicine of University of Toronto:

<https://www.dfcu.utoronto.ca/covid19-vaccination-modules>

Learn about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines, how they work and possible side effects:

[COVID-19 vaccine safety | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#)