

May 10, 2021

**MEMO TO:** Long-Term Care Home Licensees

**FROM:** Erin Hannah  
Associate Deputy Minister

**SUBJECT:** Shortened Interval for Second Dose of COVID-19 Vaccine for  
Health Care Workers in Long-Term Care Homes

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High vaccination rates in long-term care homes are critically important to protecting the health and safety of residents and staff, and a key enabler of our recovery efforts for the sector. Today, the government [announced](#) changes with respect to the second dose interval for COVID-19 vaccines.

Due to increased vaccine supply, the province is adding high-risk health care workers – which includes nurses, personal support workers, and Essential Caregivers in long-term care homes (as described in this [backgrounder](#)) – to the list of those eligible to receive their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine earlier than the extended four-month interval.

Eligibility for booking will begin by the end of this week and booking details will be provided in the coming days. In addition, the ministry continues to work with our health partners to find ways to increase convenient access to vaccines and to identify other opportunities for promoting high vaccine uptake across every home.

### ***The Importance of Vaccination***

As you are aware, given the communal nature of long-term care homes, with a population of older adults with underlying medical conditions, residents are at increased risk for contracting the COVID-19 virus and experiencing serious outcomes related to the virus.

High rates of vaccination in all long-term care homes is important to protect all individuals who live in, work, and visit homes and help reduce the risk of outbreaks and the need to isolate residents. We know that isolation means residents lose in-person social interaction and the ability to engage in activities, and that the effects of isolation are especially pronounced for residents who have dementia and/or a cognitive impairment.

On May 4, 2021, the ministry issued new guidance allowing for communal dining and indoor activities to resume. When at least 85% of residents and 70% of employees are fully immunized, some measures/precautions are further lifted.

In addition to the protective factors vaccination offers for staff and their own families, being fully immunized (at least 14 days has passed since getting the second dose of a two dose vaccine) means that they can work at more than one location per the amended [O. Reg. 146/20 \(Limiting Work to a Single Long-Term Care Home\)](#).

As a reminder, on April 29, 2021, the government introduced and passed [Bill 284, COVID-19 COVID 19 Putting Workers First Act, 2021](#), which amended the [Employment Standards Act, 2000](#) to require employers to provide employees with up to three days of paid leave, at their regular wage, up to \$200 per day, for reasons related to COVID-19. Paid leave is available for certain reasons related to COVID-19, including going to get vaccinated and experiencing a side effect from a COVID-vaccination.

The [LTC COVID-19 Vaccine Promotion Toolkit](#) continues to be available in 12 languages and we encourage you to share it with supervisors and administrators as a reminder to disseminate to the staff in each and every home.

As always, thank you for your continued dedication. We are available to support homes directly should they have any questions related to the pandemic response and recovery efforts, including regarding vaccination in long-term care. The team can be reached by emailing [MLTCPandemicResponse@ontario.ca](mailto:MLTCPandemicResponse@ontario.ca).

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

Erin Hannah

c: Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC)  
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