

May 31, 2021

MEMO TO: Long-Term Care Home Licensees
FROM: Erin Hannah
Associate Deputy Minister
SUBJECT: New Minister's Directive: Long-Term Care Home COVID-19
Immunization Policy

Congratulations on an incredibly successful vaccination campaign in the long-term care sector. Currently, an estimated 97% of all residents are fully immunized, and 88% of staff and virtually all caregivers have received at least one dose. And now, with the government's recent announcement of a shortened dose interval for staff and caregivers, good progress on second doses is being made – for example, our most recent estimate shows about 62% of staff have received two doses. We would not have reached this point without the leadership you and your teams have shown. With the government's recent release of the [Roadmap to Reopen](#), which outlines a three-step plan to safely and cautiously reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures, there is a renewed sense of hope that comes with increasing vaccination rates among the broader population of adults in the province.

While province-wide vaccination rates in homes are high, we do continue to see some variability at the home level, and a lower vaccination rate for staff in comparison to residents and essential caregivers. Getting vaccinated is one of the most important things everyone in Ontario can do, including long-term care staff, to protect themselves and their families. In long-term care homes, high vaccination rates also directly protect residents and support the highest quality of life.

That's why we want to keep the momentum going. Today I am writing to share that the **ministry is introducing a new Minister's Directive requiring all homes to have a COVID-19 immunization policy as an additional tool to promote high vaccine uptake**. At a minimum, the policy must require staff, student placements and volunteers to do one of three things:

1. **Provide proof of vaccination** against COVID-19; or
2. **Provide a documented medical reason** for not being vaccinated against COVID-19; or
3. **Participate in an educational program** approved by the licensee.

Under the directive, homes will also be required to track and report on the implementation of the policy and provide statistical information to the ministry.

To provide for a period of transition, the effective date of the Minister's Directive is **July 1, 2021**. Details about the new requirements are found in the attached Minister's Directive. Additional information, including an example of a minimum policy, and links to useful educational resources, is provided in the resource guide, also attached. Details regarding the process for reporting of statistical information will be provided shortly.

We are continuing to look for more ways to help increase staff uptake in partnership with the Ministry of Health and through our ongoing engagement with local public health units, and we know all of you are keeping up your home-based efforts to encourage everyone to "get the shot".

As always, we are available to support homes directly should they have any questions related to the pandemic, including regarding vaccination in long-term care homes. The team can be reached by emailing MLTCPandemicResponse@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

original signed by

Erin Hannah

Attachments (2):

- Minister's Directive – Long-Term Care Home COVID-19 Immunization Policy
- Resource Guide

c: Richard Steele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Long-Term Care (MLTC)
Helen Angus, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health (MOH)
Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health
Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Pandemic Response and Recovery Division, MOH
Michael Hillmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Capacity Planning and Analytics Division, MOH/MLTC
Lisa Levin, Chief Executive Officer, AdvantAge Ontario
Donna Duncan, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Long Term Care Association
Monika Turner, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Michael Jacek, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Colleen Geiger, President and CEO (Acting), Public Health Ontario
Jeff Butler, Assistant Deputy Minister, LTC Pandemic Response, MLTC
Sheila Bristo, Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations, MLTC