



Alberta's government is directing AHS to introduce, temporarily, frequent and targeted COVID-19 testing as part of the organization's Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy. Only sites considered at significant risk of service disruptions resulting from staffing shortages due to unimmunized employees will be part of the testing program.

Under AHS' current policy, employees who chose not to be fully immunized and have not been granted an accommodation would be put on an unpaid leave of absence.

“I've heard from many Albertans, especially in smaller communities, who are worried this policy will impact patient care. We fully support AHS' immunization policy, and I appreciate the tens of thousands of health-care workers who have made the right choice to get vaccinated. This directive is about protecting patient care – primarily in rural areas – which will always be my top priority.”

—  
*Jason Copping, Minister of Health*

The proof of negative COVID-19 testing program begins on Dec. 13. AHS' immunization policy deadline will also be adjusted to Dec. 13 to accommodate the introduction of testing. The testing addition will be reviewed by March 2022.

To date, 96 per cent of AHS full-time and part-time employees and more than 99 per cent of physicians have submitted proof of immunization. Ninety-nine per cent of intensive care unit staff are fully immunized.

AHS will continue to evaluate its staffing needs and provide a full list of sites where testing is taking place by the Dec. 13 deadline.

## Multimedia

- [Watch the news conference](#)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=805124A2FC4A3-975B-85F4-452E46A1264A5682>

## Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy

The following information is meant to address some questions you may have about Alberta Health Services (AHS) Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy. The following document will be updated as additional information is available. We encourage you to check back frequently for updates.

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- According to Alberta Health: “Available evidence suggests that most individuals would have a certain degree of immunity for at least 90 days after initial diagnosis of COVID-19. However, the risk for reinfection is likely to increase due to waning immunity after initial infection and exposure to variants that cause immune escape.”
- You can also find more information and the latest studies on the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#).

11. I already work remotely. Why do I need to be fully immunized?

- We all have a duty to protect the health and safety of each other, the patients and the public, prevent the spread of COVID-19 and outbreaks in AHS facilities, and to preserve workforce capacity to protect our healthcare system.
- It is important that all AHS workers, including those working remotely are fully immunized as you may need to access an AHS site, facility or have contact with another AHS worker at any time.
- This decision ensures consistency and fairness across the organization.

12. Why isn't rapid testing an alternative to immunization?

- There are significant safety and efficacy concerns with rapid testing. Current rapid testing technology is designed for those experiencing symptoms, which creates a large risk of false positives (up to 30 per cent), and this could lead to workers being unnecessarily restricted from work.
- The occurrence of false negatives is even more significant (reported as high as up to 50 per cent) where workers may be entering care environments infected with COVID-19.

## Vaccine Safety Concerns

13. I have questions about the safety of the vaccine. Where do I find more information?

- All approved vaccines are safe, tested, effective and help prevent serious illness. Here are some helpful resources about vaccine safety on the AHS [webpage](#).
- Additional facts can be found here: [Health Canada](#) and [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\): Statements and publications](#).

14. I'm pregnant. Do I still need to receive the COVID-19 immunization?

- [AHS' Position Statement on Pregnant Healthcare Workers and COVID-19](#), aligns with the latest recommendations from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) and the [Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada \(SOGC\)](#). NACI and SOGC recommend that pregnant people get two doses of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Please consult with your physician or health care provider or get the facts about the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).
- There may be situations where a pregnant worker may be medically supported for an accommodation. Should you be medically unable to get the vaccine because of your pregnancy, please refer to the accommodation section.

15. What work-related compensation is available to employees who have reactions to COVID-19 vaccines?

- According to the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) policy: “When immunization is required for the prevention of a work-related disease or infection and as a result of a reaction to this compulsory immunization a worker experiences a loss of earnings, WCB will consider the reaction and its consequences to be compensable.”

## CMO SMOH Notice for AHS Medical Staff

October 8, 2021

We would like to recognize that our work takes place on historical and contemporary Indigenous lands, including the territories of Treaties 6, 7 & 8, and the homeland of the Métis. We also acknowledge the many Indigenous communities that have been forged in urban centres across Alberta.

### This week:

- Now is the Time to Submit your Proof of Immunization for COVID-19
- Support for Physicians
- Common Questions about COVID-19 Immunization
- New Sessions Added — Mandatory Vaccination: An Ethics Perspective
- Verna's Weekly Video Message — Spotlight on Protective Services
- No Change to Designated Support, Visitation Access for Thanksgiving
- Highlights from the CEO All Staff Update
  - COVID-19 Case Status in Alberta
  - COVID-19 Immunization Update
  - Changes to School Outbreak Reporting, Contact Notification
  - New Outdoor Gathering Restrictions
  - Canadian Armed Forces Nurses Land in Edmonton
  - Fort McMurray Prepares for Arrival of Newfoundland Healthcare Team
- MD Culture Shift
- Doctor of the Week: Call for Nominations
- Beyond COVID-19
- Additional Resources for Physicians
- Wrapping Up — Let's Celebrate Thanksgiving Safely

### **Now is the time to Submit Your Proof of Immunization for COVID-19**

All physicians, nurse practitioners, medical and midwifery staff, students, volunteers and contracted healthcare providers must be fully immunized by Oct. 31, 2021, to comply with the *Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy*.

The policy applies to the workforce broadly, including AHS medical staff with privileges in AHS facilities and programs, and AHS midwifery staff.

You must receive the final dose of your vaccine series no later than Oct. 16, 2021, to be considered fully immunized by Oct. 31, 2021. It's essential to ensure the safety of our people, patients and communities. Healthcare workers have an ethical and professional responsibility to protect others. Immunization helps us meet this standard.

If you are fully immunized, please don't wait until the Oct. 16, 2021, deadline to submit your proof of immunization, as this information is needed for planning purposes.

See the *Got My COVID-19 Immunization Form* for instructions on how to submit your record today.

### **Please note:**

- **If you are both an employee of AHS and AHS Medical Staff, please submit the form twice: once noting your employee number and once without, but including your CPISA number.**

<sup>2</sup> <https://albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/ppih/if-ppih-covid-19-cmo-update-2021-10-08.pdf>

## **Q: Why isn't rapid testing an alternative to immunization?**

**A:** There are significant safety and efficacy concerns with rapid testing. Current rapid testing technology is designed for those experiencing symptoms, which creates a large risk of false positives (up to 30 per cent), and this could lead to workers being unnecessarily restricted from work. The occurrence of false negatives is even more significant (reported as high as up to 50 per cent) where workers may be entering care environments infected with COVID-19.

## **New Sessions Added – Mandatory Vaccination: An Ethics Perspective**

Due to growing demand, the Clinical Ethics Service is offering more live sessions for staff to learn about the ethics of mandatory vaccination.

The session sheds light on how healthcare workers have additional obligations, how there will be times when prevention of harm to others can justify curtailing individual liberties, and how those liberties should be curtailed as little as possible when trying to achieve public health goals.

**Tues, Oct. 12**                    **10 a.m. to 11 a.m. (Edmonton Zone)**  
Zoom Meeting (or call in by phone 1 587 328 1099 Meeting ID: 984 6758 4999, passcode: 879213)

**Wed, Oct. 13**                    **7 a.m. to 8 a.m. (All zones)**  
Zoom Meeting (call in by phone 1 587 328 1099 Meeting ID: 979 8995 6422, passcode: 503864)

**11 a.m. to noon (Calgary Zone)**  
Zoom Meeting (call in by phone 1 587 328 1099 Meeting ID: 954 8795 1036, passcode: 316905)

**Thurs, Oct. 14**                    **9 a.m. to 10 a.m. (South Zone)**  
Zoom Meeting (call in by phone 1 587 328 1099 Meeting ID: 915 4812 6999, passcode: 042489)

**5 p.m. to 6 p.m. (All zones)**  
Zoom Meeting (call in by phone 1 587 328 1099 Meeting ID: 943 0572 8996, passcode: 890573)

If you can't make the sessions, a recording has been posted on the [AHS website](#) for anyone interested. The Clinical Ethics Service also authored a guide to help us [navigate ethical challenges in the COVID-19 pandemic](#). If you have questions, contact [clinicaethics@ahs.ca](mailto:clinicaethics@ahs.ca).

## **Verna's Weekly Video Message – Spotlight on Protective Services**

Protective Services is an important part of our care team, dedicated to ensuring we can deliver safe, quality, patient- and family-centered care to Albertans. During the pandemic, their role has become even more important.

As you may have heard, and some of you experienced, many of our front-line teams are facing harassment from people who do not believe the COVID-19 pandemic is real. They fail or refuse to comprehend the realities AHS staff and physicians are experiencing every day. This harassment is

- Additional updates and information are being shared through the [College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta \(CPSA\)](#).

*This update is intended to provide a summary of the key action items, information and decisions for AHS Medical Staff in relation to clinical policies and practices, and for the COVID-19 pandemic response. It is forwarded to physicians' preferred email inbox.*

*Do you have COVID-19 questions, information, or a physician or team who have gone above and beyond during the pandemic, that you would like to see covered in an upcoming edition of the COVID-19 CMO update? Let us know at [CMO@ahs.ca](mailto:CMO@ahs.ca).*

## **Wrapping Up – Let's Celebrate Thanksgiving Safely**

It's difficult to believe that we're heading into another long weekend, and a Thanksgiving weekend, while still dealing with very high cases of COVID-19.

Last year there was a spike in cases after Thanksgiving, largely caused by people coming together to mark the holiday. This is understandable. We yearn for human contact, particularly during this difficult time when case numbers are so high and necessary restrictions are in place.

We all need to ensure this doesn't happen this year. As you're surely aware, we do not have the capacity to handle another significant spike in cases. If you have a chance to celebrate Thanksgiving this year, please follow the public health restrictions, limit contact with people outside of your household, don't socialize if you are feeling unwell and wear a mask. And please encourage others to do so, too.

We have made some progress in reducing pressure on our healthcare system but that was not without a price. We thank all of you for your sacrifices. Let's make Thanksgiving a safe holiday and let's all continue to support one another.

With enduring gratitude and appreciation,

**Dr. Francois Belanger**

Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, Quality

**Dr. Laura McDougall**

Senior Medical Officer of Health



# Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy

## Frequently asked questions

Updated: October 22, 2021

**\*Update\*** AHS is extending the deadline for employees – including physicians, frontline staff, volunteers, students and contractors – to comply with the Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy.

All Covenant Health employees, medical and midwifery staff, students, volunteers and other persons acting on Covenant Health’s behalf now have until Nov. 30, 2021, to be fully immunized against COVID-19.

The following information is meant to address some questions you may have about Alberta Health Services (AHS) Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy. The following FAQs will be updated as additional information is available. We encourage you to check back frequently for updates.

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With this mandatory policy, OHS&W must validate the disclosure, so the form now includes the ability to provide consent to validate your records, or you must submit your records.

10. Will I be able to leave work during my scheduled shift to get immunized?

Covenant Health workers are entitled up to three hours of paid leave (or longer if the employer deems it reasonable) to get each dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, if the appointment occurs during the employee's shift.

Employees and managers should work together when scheduling COVID-19 immunization leaves. Employees are required to give their leader as much notice as possible before requesting this leave.

11. I recently had COVID-19, but I'm better now, so why do I need to be fully immunized?

All workers must be immunized regardless of whether they have already had COVID-19. If you have already recovered from COVID-19, there is still a chance you could contract COVID-19 again or spread it to others. You are not considered fully immunized if you have not completed a vaccine series in accordance with Question 6.

According to Alberta Health, "Available evidence suggests that most individuals would have a certain degree of immunity for at least 90 days after initial diagnosis of COVID-19. However, the risk for reinfection is likely to increase due to waning immunity after initial infection and exposure to variants that cause immune escape."

You can also find more information and the latest studies on the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#).

12. I already work remotely. Why do I need to be fully immunized?

It's important that all healthcare workers, including those working from home, are immunized in case they need to return to the workplace for any reason.

We all have a duty to protect the health and safety of each other, our patients/residents and the public, prevent the spread of COVID-19 and outbreaks in Covenant Health facilities, and to preserve workforce capacity to protect our healthcare system.

This decision ensures consistency and fairness across the organization.

13. Why can't rapid testing be an alternative to immunization?

There are significant safety and efficacy concerns with rapid testing. Current rapid testing technology is designed for those experiencing symptoms, which creates a large risk of false positives (up to 30 per cent), where workers will be restricted unnecessarily.

The occurrence of false negatives is even more significant (reported as high as up to 50 per cent), where workers may be entering care environments infected with COVID-19. Both instances risk the safety of our workers, patients and families by either exposing them to

COVID-19 or risking further pressure on our staffing levels.

## Vaccine safety concerns

14. I have questions about the safety of the vaccine. Where do I find more information?

All approved vaccines are safe, tested, effective and help prevent serious illness. Learn more about vaccine safety [here](#). Additional facts can be found [here](#).

Additional facts can be found here: [Health Canada](#) and [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\): Statements and publications](#).

15. I'm pregnant. Do I still need to receive the COVID-19 immunization?

Many pregnant women have been immunized and there is no suggestion that there is any safety issue for COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy. Likewise, there is no indication that the COVID-19 vaccine can cause infertility.

If you require more information, you can read [AHS' Position Statement on Pregnant Healthcare Workers and COVID-19](#), which was recently updated to reflect the latest recommendations from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) and the [Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada \(SOGC\)](#). NACI and SOGC recommend that pregnant people get two doses of COVID-19 vaccine.

Please consult with your physician or health care provider or get the facts about the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).

There may be situations where a pregnant worker may be medically supported not to be immunized, which would result in a supported medical accommodation. Should you be medically unable to get the vaccine because of your pregnancy, please refer to the accommodation section.

15. What work-related compensation is available to employees who have reactions to COVID-19 vaccines?

According to the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) policy, "When immunization is required for the prevention of a work-related disease or infection and as a result of a reaction to this compulsory immunization a worker experiences a loss of earnings, WCB will consider the reaction and its consequences to be compensable."

WCB will adjudicate work-related claims and benefit entitlement based on a case-by-case basis.

For more information, see the [WCB Worker Fact Sheet on COVID-19 Vaccine Reactions](#).

16. Am I being forced to get immunized?

COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION POLICY

# Frequently Asked Questions

Revised Nov. 2021

## Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy

The following information is meant to address some questions you may have about Alberta Health Services (AHS) Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy. The following document will be updated as additional information is available. We encourage you to check back frequently for updates.

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## Policy

1. What is the purpose of the Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy?
  - The purpose of the Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy is to protect the health and safety of our workers, patients and the public, and to preserve workforce capacity to support the healthcare system.
  - This policy sets out worker immunization requirements for COVID-19.
  - Alberta Health Services (AHS), Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL), Carewest, CapitalCare and Covenant Health will require all employees, members of medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers and contractors to be fully immunized for COVID-19 by Dec 13, 2021.

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- As per the LAPP Standards, contributions are not required during this unpaid LOA. Eligible employees will have the opportunity to buy back their service through the annual pension buy-back campaign or through the prior service process.

## Targeted Testing at Facilities at Significant Risk of Service Disruption

***\*\*This new section will continued to be updated as more details are confirmed\*\****

### 21. Why is temporary targeted rapid testing being considered as part of this policy? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- At the direction of Government, Alberta Health Services will temporarily introduce frequent, targeted COVID-19 testing as part of this policy.
- To ensure uninterrupted patient care, those eligible workers who are not fully immunized at a limited number of work locations will be able to provide proof of negative COVID-19 tests starting Dec. 13.
- The immunization policy deadline will also be adjusted to Dec. 13 to accommodate the introduction of testing at facilities at significant risk of service disruption.
- Patient care has always been the focus of the mandatory immunization policy – AHS must do all it can to ensure patients, particularly those who are more vulnerable or immuno-compromised, continue to be provided and protected while in our care.
- Only work locations considered at significant risk of staffing shortages and subsequent service disruptions will be part of the testing program, which will be reviewed at the end of March 2022.

### 22. Which sites are considered significant risk? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- According to the Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy, a facility at a significant risk of service disruption is determined by the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Operations considering the following factors: limited staffing options available, high pre-policy vacancy rate, low vaccine confirmation rate and low mitigation effectiveness.
- Eligible workers who are not fully immunized at facilities at significant risk of service disruption will be notified prior to Dec. 13, 2021 that they are eligible for rapid testing.

### 23. Who is eligible for rapid testing? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- Only those eligible workers who are not fully immunized and are working in a facility that is at a significant risk of service disruption will be required to undergo regular rapid testing.
- We anticipate about 260 employees will be eligible for this temporary testing option, across approximately 16 work locations provincially. This represents about 0.2 per cent of staff, at about three per cent of AHS sites.
- We anticipate this number will decrease as we develop additional mitigation strategies to ensure any service disruptions are limited.
- Sites of significant risk are subject to change. The list of affected sites is currently being finalized.
- Eligible employees who work at those affected locations who are not fully immunized will be notified before Dec. 13 that they are working in a facility at significant risk of service disruption and are eligible for the testing option while they are not fully immunized.
- This does not apply to a worker hired after Nov. 30 or to any worker in a work location that is not at a significant risk of service disruption.

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- Eligible medical staff at affected sites who opt out will be subject to an Immediate Action as determined by the Medical Staff Bylaws.

24. What does temporary targeted rapid testing look like? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- Those eligible employees at affected sites who are not fully immunized and choose the testing option will be required to provide proof of a negative (Health Canada approved) COVID-19 test that was completed no more than 48 hours before each of their working shifts, at the employee's cost. A positive rapid test would require a PCR test.
- If an employee has multiple shifts in a week, this may mean multiple tests will be required.
- Testing costs and coordination will be the responsibility of the employee.
- If an employee opts not to provide regular proof of a negative COVID-19 test, they will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence.
- Except for where an accommodation has been granted, employees at all other sites who are not fully immunized by Dec. 13, 2021 will also be placed on an unpaid leave of absence.
- Eligible employees with an approved accommodation working at facilities at significant risk of service disruption, may be accommodated by rapid testing 48 hours before each working shift.

25. Who will be paying for tests? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- The cost of the tests are at the worker's expense, unless an approved workplace accommodation or exception (for medical or midwifery staffs) applies.
- The testing must be completed on the worker's own time. This means workers will not be paid for the time getting tested.

26. What types of tests will be accepted? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- The worker must be tested using a Health Canada-approved COVID-19 test.
- The test must be conducted at an existing private testing location (e.g., a pharmacy). Publicly-funded COVID-19 testing (e.g., through AHS) will not be accepted.

27. How do I submit proof of a negative test? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- The worker must retain proof (paper or electronic) of a negative test result and show that proof to their leader before the start of their next scheduled shift and if asked during their shift.
- If the worker tests positive for COVID-19, the worker must be tested for COVID-19 using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. If the PCR test is positive, the worker must isolate in accordance with applicable Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders and the AHS Attending Work with COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test, or Close Contact Directive.

28. What if an unimmunized worker chooses not to participate in the testing program? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- Workers who refuse to be tested or fail to comply with these conditions will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence until they are fully immunized.

29. I work from home and I am currently not fully immunized, can I participate in this testing program? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- No, only employees at facilities at significant risk of service disruption as determined by the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Operations are eligible.

30. If eligible, will I be able to opt-in and out of testing? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- No, there will be no opportunity to opt-in and out. Those who are eligible for the testing option will be required to confirm with their manager their intent to adhere to testing. If they choose not

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to be tested, they will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence. If they agree to test and later choose not to be tested, they will immediately be placed on unpaid leave.

31. I have more questions, who do I contact for further information? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- As more information becomes available, we will continue to update our resources. Check this section often as it will be regularly updated.
- Your first point of contact should always be your leader to address any questions you may have.
- You can also contact [AHSVaccineTaskForce@ahs.ca](mailto:AHSVaccineTaskForce@ahs.ca) if additional support is needed.

## Vaccine Safety Concerns

32. I have questions about the safety of the vaccine. Where do I find more information?

- All approved vaccines are safe, tested, effective and help prevent serious illness. Here are some helpful resources about vaccine safety on the AHS [webpage](#).
- Additional facts can be found here: [Health Canada](#) and [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\): Statements and publications](#).
- If you continue to have questions about vaccine safety, please email us at [AHSVaccineTaskForce@ahs.ca](mailto:AHSVaccineTaskForce@ahs.ca). We will connect with you with an AHS expert who can provide you with accurate and up-to-date information.

33. I'm pregnant. Do I still need to receive the COVID-19 immunization?

- [AHS' Position Statement on Pregnant Healthcare Workers and COVID-19](#), aligns with the latest recommendations from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) and the [Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada \(SOGC\)](#). NACI and SOGC recommend that pregnant people get two doses of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Please consult with your physician or health care provider or get the facts about the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#).
- There may be situations where a worker may be medically supported for an accommodation, please refer to the accommodation section for more information.

34. What work-related compensation is available to employees who have reactions to COVID-19 vaccines?

- According to the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) policy: "When immunization is required for the prevention of a work-related disease or infection and as a result of a reaction to this compulsory immunization a worker experiences a loss of earnings, WCB will consider the reaction and its consequences to be compensable."
- WCB will accept a COVID-19 vaccination reaction when vaccination is a mandatory condition of employment.
- WCB will adjudicate work-related claims and benefit entitlement based on a case-by-case basis.
- For more information, see the [WCB Worker Fact Sheet on COVID-19 Vaccine Reactions](#)

## Additional Information

35. Will I be able to leave work during my scheduled shift to get immunized?

- AHS employees are entitled up to [three hours of paid leave](#) (or longer if the employer deems it reasonable) to get each dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, if the appointment occurs during the employee's shift.

## Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy

The following information is meant to address questions leaders may get from employees about Alberta Health Services (AHS) Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy. This document will be updated as additional information is available. We encourage you to check back frequently for updates.

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requests being delayed or cancelled. The approval delegate must have appropriate approval rights in the specific application.

23. How will managers know if an employee is fully immunized while on leave?

- Prior to return to work, employees placed on unpaid LOA will have to provide proof that they are fully immunized in accordance with the policy. Employees are to submit their form once fully immunized using [COVID-19 Got My COVID-19 Immunization Form](#).
- We are determining the process how reports will be updated as employees submit their immunization forms after Dec. 13, in order to return from the unpaid LOA. Further details on this process will be communicated when confirmed.

24. If an employee who is non-compliant with the policy goes on medical LOA prior to Dec. 13, will they be transferred to an unpaid leave at that time?

- If the employee was on an approved medical LOA prior to Dec. 13, 2021, they would remain on paid medical leave until such time they are fit to return to work. If they are not in compliance with the policy once they are cleared to return to work, then they will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence. Please speak to your Ability Advisor for assistance on specific situations and how the policy may apply.

### Targeted Testing at Facilities at Significant Risk of Service Disruption

25. Why is temporary targeted rapid testing being considered as part of the Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- At the direction of Government, Alberta Health Services will temporarily introduce frequent, targeted COVID-19 testing as part of the organization's Immunization for Workers for COVID-19 Policy.
- To ensure uninterrupted patient care, those eligible workers who are not fully immunized at a limited number of sites will be able to provide proof of negative COVID-19 tests starting Dec. 13, 2021.
- The immunization policy deadline will also be adjusted to Dec. 13 to accommodate the introduction of testing at facilities at significant risk of service disruption.
- Patient care has always been the focus of the mandatory immunization policy – AHS must do all it can to ensure patients, particularly those who are more vulnerable or immuno-compromised, continue to be provided and protected while in our care.
- Only work locations considered at significant risk of staffing shortages and subsequent service disruptions will be part of the testing program, which will be reviewed at the end of March 2022.

26. Which sites are considered significant risk? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- According to the Immunization of Workers for COVID-19 Policy, a facility at a significant risk of service disruption is determined by the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Operations considering the following factors: limited staffing options available, high pre-policy vacancy rate, low vaccine confirmation rate and low mitigation effectiveness.
- Eligible workers who are not fully immunized at facilities at significant risk of service disruption will be notified prior to Dec. 13, 2021 that they are eligible for rapid testing.

27. Who is eligible for rapid testing? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- Only those eligible workers who are not fully immunized and are working in a facility that is at a significant risk of service disruption will be required to undergo regular rapid testing.

- We anticipate about 260 employees will be eligible for this temporary testing option, across approximately 16 work locations provincially. This represents about 0.2 per cent of staff, at about three per cent of AHS sites.
- We anticipate this number will decrease as we develop additional mitigation strategies to ensure any service disruptions are limited.
- Sites of significant risk are subject to change. The list of affected sites is currently being finalized.
- Eligible employees who work at those affected locations who are not fully immunized will be notified before Dec. 13 that they are working in a facility at significant risk of service disruption and are eligible for the testing option while they are not fully immunized.
- This does not apply to a worker hired after Nov. 30, 2021 or to any worker in a facility that is not at a significant risk of service disruption.
- Eligible medical staff at affected sites who opt out will be subject to an Immediate Action as determined by the Medical Staff Bylaws.

28. What does temporary targeted rapid testing look like? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- Those eligible employees at affected sites who are not fully immunized and choose the testing option will be required to provide proof of a negative (Health Canada approved) COVID-19 test that was completed no more than 48 hours before each of their working shifts, at the employee's cost. A positive rapid test would require a PCR test.
- If an employee has multiple shifts in a week, this may mean multiple tests will be required.
- Testing costs and coordination will be the responsibility of the employee.
- If an employee opts not to provide regular proof of a negative COVID-19 test, they will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence.
- Except for where an accommodation has been granted, employees at all other sites who are not fully immunized by Dec. 13, 2021 will also be placed on an unpaid leave of absence.
- Eligible employees with an approved accommodation working at facilities at significant risk of service disruption, may be accommodated by rapid testing 48 hours before each working shift.

29. Who will be paying for tests? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- The cost of the tests are at the worker's expense, unless an approved workplace accommodation or exception (for medical or midwifery staffs) applies.
- The testing must be completed on the worker's own time. This means workers will not be paid for the time getting tested.

30. What types of tests will be accepted? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- The worker must be tested using a Health Canada-approved COVID-19 test.
- The test must be conducted at an existing private testing location (e.g., a pharmacy). Publicly-funded COVID-19 testing (e.g., through AHS) will not be accepted.

31. How do I submit proof of a negative test? **\*\*NEW\*\***

- The worker must retain proof (paper or electronic) of a negative test result and show that proof to their leader before the start of their next scheduled shift and if asked during their shift.
- If the worker tests positive for COVID-19, the worker must be tested for COVID-19 using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test. If the PCR test is positive, the worker must isolate in accordance with applicable Chief Medical Officer of Health Orders and the AHS Attending Work with COVID-19 Symptoms, Positive Test, or Close Contact Directive.

32. What if an unimmunized worker chooses not to participate in the testing program? **\*\*NEW\*\***
- Workers who refuse to be tested or fail to comply with these conditions will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence until they are fully immunized.
33. I work from home and I am currently not fully immunized, can I participate in this testing program? **\*\*NEW\*\***
- No, only employees at facilities at significant risk of service disruption as determined by the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Clinical Operations are eligible.
34. If eligible, will I be able to opt-in and out of testing? **\*\*NEW\*\***
- No, there will be no opportunity to opt-in and out. Those who are eligible for the testing option will be required to confirm with their manager their intent to adhere to testing. If they choose not to be tested, they will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence. If they agree to test and later choose not to be tested, they will immediately be placed on unpaid leave.
35. I have more questions, who do I contact for further information? **\*\*NEW\*\***
- As more information becomes available, we will continue to update our resources. Check this section often as it will be regularly updated.
  - Your first point of contact should always be your leader to address any questions you may have.
  - You can also contact [AHSVaccineTaskForce@ahs.ca](mailto:AHSVaccineTaskForce@ahs.ca) if additional support is needed.

## Deadline

36. I had to implement shift schedule changes as a result of employees that were going to be on leave of absence due to non-compliance with the Policy. The deadline to become fully immunized is now Dec. 13, what do I do to revert to the previous schedule?
- Due to collective agreement impacts with any short notice of schedule changes, please contact your HRBP Advisor for additional information and support.
37. If I have to cancel some shifts, what notice do I have to give to those part-time and casual employees?
- Any additional shifts that were offered and accepted by a part-time or casual employee can be cancelled in advance in accordance with the applicable collective agreement. Please contact your HRBP Advisor for additional information and support.
38. I have an employee who would have been on an unpaid leave and now cannot work as they made other plans. Now that the deadline to become fully immunized is Dec. 13, would they be required to work?
- Each situation should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact your HRBP Advisor for additional information and support.
39. I have an employee who submitted their resignation as they were not going to comply with the Policy. Now that the date to be fully immunized has been extended, can the employee request to rescind their resignation?
- Due to the complex nature of this question, please contact your HRBP Advisor for additional information and support.
40. Can employees who are placed on an unpaid leave for non-compliance work for another employer for gain?

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01-Dec-2021

This is Exhibit "V" referred to in the Affidavit of:

David Thomas Dickson

Sworn before me this

2<sup>nd</sup> day of December, 2021

**Redacted** \_\_\_\_\_

Commissioner for Oaths, Justice or the Peace,

or Notary Public in and for Alberta

**Redacted** \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name and Expiry Date

A Commissioner for Oaths  
in and for the Province of Alberta  
Appointment expires 2023/02/22