MEMO

Date: September 24, 2021
To: All Health-Care Workers
From: Lanette Siragusa, Chief Nursing Officer, Shared Health
Dr. Brent Roussin, Chief Provincial Public Health Officer
Re: COVID-19 Vaccination Status Disclosure – Updated Information

Updated Information for Direct Care Workers

Later today, Manitoba will provide additional information related to new public health orders that require all direct care workers to provide proof of their fully vaccinated status to their employer OR undergo regular COVID-19 testing.

This new information confirms that testing of all direct care workers who are not fully vaccinated will begin on October 18, 2021 (not on October 31, 2021 as previously communicated).

We are asking all direct care workers to complete the online or paper version of the form developed for this purpose by October 1, 2021.

Physicians/medical staff please note: you will be receiving specific information and a unique link from your Chief Medical Officer/Site Medical Lead.

Testing equipment and supplies have been secured and made available sooner than anticipated and health-care employers, sites and programs are working to finalize policies and procedures to support rapid testing for unvaccinated staff. This is a necessary additional precaution in response to the significant threat posed by the delta variant.

Manitoba’s health system is making every effort to have these measures in place well in advance of a fourth wave for the protection of our patients, residents, clients and colleagues as well as to preserve vital health services and capacity to meet the needs of Manitobans.

In preparation for this requirement, managers and/or their designate have been connecting with health care workers who meet the definition of a direct care worker.

Individuals whose work activities and/or role are determined to fall within the requirements of the upcoming Public Health Order have been asked to complete a Disclosure Form.
INSTRUCTIONS – COVID-19 Vaccination Disclosure Form

The form requires direct care workers to either disclose their vaccination status or indicate their need to access regular/frequent COVID-19 testing (by selecting one of the following options: partially vaccinated; do not wish to disclose; or not vaccinated).

The form has been updated to allow for your vaccination status be validated for you, with your consent.

If you have previously submitted your information and it has been validated by your manager/designate, please disregard. Your manager/designate has been provided with a link to enter your information and indicate that they have validated your vaccination status.

If you have not yet had your vaccination status validated, please submit your information again as we have automated the validation process for those who consent. We apologize for any inconvenience caused, however, we have determined this process will alleviate significant manual work by managers/designate across the health system, significantly speeding up our ability to prepare.

Step 1 - Please access the form by selecting the “health-care worker(employee)” button and following the steps. If you have an employee number, please enter it. If you do not have an employee number (including volunteers), you may skip that field and continue.

Step 2 – Complete the required fields. If you disclose that you are fully vaccinated, you will be asked to provide your personal health information number (PHIN) and to consent to its use for the sole purpose of automated verification of your COVID-19 immunization status.

Step 2a - Should you consent, your PHIN will be used by an automated process similar to what is used when your Manitoba Immunization QR code is scanned at a restaurant or sporting activity. Only a “Green/Yes” or “Red/No” response will be returned. No other personal health information will be accessed or exposed and your PHIN will not be retained or stored once this task has been completed.

Your information is solely used for the purpose of verifying your specific COVID-19 immunization status. This is an automated process and at no time will your health record be accessed or entered by an employer or the health system for a purpose other than receiving a “Red Light” or a “Green Light” regarding your COVID-19 vaccinations.

Step 2b – Should you decline to provide your PHIN or to consent to its use for this specific purpose, your vaccination status must be validated manually by your manager/designate.

As a reminder, the link is only accessible from a computer connected to the digital health network. For those without access, a paper version of the form is available from your manager/designate.
Should you encounter any issues in accessing the form, please contact the Service Desk at 204-940-8500, toll-free at 1-866-999-9698 or email servicedesk@sharedhealthmb.ca.

Privacy

Your vaccine status is personal health information and will be protected and stored in accordance with The Personal Health Information Act and all established protocols. Other than your name and vaccination status, disclosure and consent for the use of your PHIN will not permit access or exposure of any personal health information other than your COVID-19 Vaccination Status (“Red Light or No”/“Green Light or Yes”).

This information is essential in the development of an efficient rapid testing approach for those who are not fully vaccinated or who choose not to disclose.

If your vaccination status changes at any time, you are asked to update your information at the same link.

Testing

Although submission of the form is a requirement, you may choose to decline disclosure of your vaccination status. All Direct Care Workers who do not provide proof of full vaccination by October 18, 2021 will be required to undergo regular COVID-19 testing.

While specific implementation of rapid testing processes may vary by site or setting, and individuals will receive more information directly from their site or manager before October 18, 2021, please note the following general principles:

1. Asymptomatic Direct Care Workers who have not provided proof of full vaccination will undergo regular/frequent rapid testing using either the Abbott PanBio COVID-19 antigen test or the BD Veritor COVID-19 antigen test.
2. These tests collect a specimen using a nasal swab inserted approximately 2 cm into the nose and provide a result in approximately 15 minutes. A nasopharyngeal swab is not required.
3. The tests will be self-administered and easy-to-follow directions will be provided to all who are required to participate in regular rapid testing.
4. Specific details on how and where testing will occur will be shared directly with those required to undergo regular rapid testing.
5. Direct care workers will be required to maintain a testing log. Individuals may be asked to produce this log for review by a manager/designate or a representative of public health. Spot checks and observed testing may also occur at the discretion of the manager, site or service delivery organization.
6. Individuals who receive a negative test result are to be considered presumptive negative for a period of 48 hours. Direct care workers will be responsible for monitoring the time between their tests and ensuring compliance with the Order.
7. Individuals who receive a positive test result will be responsible for notifying their supervisor immediately and will leave work, when appropriate, in coordination with their supervisor. The individual should seek confirmatory testing at a provincial testing site.

More information related to the rapid testing approach will be made available in the near future. A Frequently Asked Questions document is available and being updated as information is available.

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation and commitment to the safety and protection of our patients, residents, clients, colleagues and community.