



Department of Health & Wellness

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To: Long-Term Care and Community Care Facilities

**From: Dr. Heather Morrison Chief Public Health Officer
Dr. David Sabapathy, Deputy Chief Public Health Officer**

Date: June 1, 2021

Subject: LTC Staff Vaccine Rates & Mandatory Testing

COVID-19 vaccination of residents and staff belonging to Long Term Care and Community Care is a priority on Prince Edward Island. Vaccine supply has been allocated to these vulnerable groups from the beginning of this unprecedented vaccine program and rollout across Prince Edward Island. With the recent announcement of the COVID-19 in PEI: Moving Forward plan, there has never been a more important time to ensure high levels of vaccination among long-term care and community care staff.

A central goal of staff vaccination has been to protect our residents living in these settings from severe illness and the extensive morbidity and mortality that was seen across Canada. Vaccine uptake among residents within LTC and Community Care has been well received in most settings which has allowed further relaxation of visitation restrictions, resumption of staff movement between LTC facilities vaccinated staff, and increased movement for residents such as attending church in the community.

Collectively, the goal is to achieve 85% and greater vaccination rates among staff. Unvaccinated staff continue to pose a risk to vulnerable seniors and provide an entry point for COVID-19 into our seniors living and care environments.

Unfortunately, staff vaccination rates have not reached this target rate in many facilities. Across the Island, approximately, 764 staff have yet to receive a first dose of vaccine. 32 of the 48 LTC or CC homes on PEI have not reached staff vaccination rates of 85% or greater.

As a result, and to enhance the protective measures needed to keep Island seniors safe, all staff who have yet to receive a first dose of vaccine and who are employed in a home with less than 85% vaccination coverage of staff will require weekly COVID-19 testing.

Administration should identify, support, and educate unvaccinated staff on the benefits of COVID-19 vaccination for themselves, their families, and the residents whom their care is entrusted. Education material from credible resources has been provided to share with staff to help reduce mis-information and vaccine hesitancy. Finally, staff that work in these environments will continue to be granted priority vaccination of first dose and second doses to further reduce introduction and transmission in the care home setting.

Administration will be required to ensure unvaccinated staff are aware of new testing requirements and to validate weekly testing is being completed.

Thank you all for your continued support of the COVID-19 Vaccination program and public health measures keeping our residents safe.

cc: Shelley MacCallum, Manager, Community Care & Private Nursing Home Facilities
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