

COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (REVISED)			800.1200
Section	HUMAN RESOURCES - Working Environment		
Authorized by	CEO	Date	December 8, 2021
Applies to	All employees	Archive version	September 22, 2021
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## BACKGROUND:

Nothing is more important to SPRINT Senior Care than the health and safety of our staff, volunteers, and students (“workers”), and clients. We take seriously our obligation to do everything reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers from being hurt or getting a work-related illness and to make sure workers know about hazards and dangers by providing information, instruction, and supervision on how to work safely.

SPRINT Senior Care is committed to providing a safe workplace and fostering a safe and healthy workplace environment where workers feel well supported and equipped with the right tools and training. The COVID-19 pandemic has required new workplace strategies to help keep our workers, clients, and visitors safe.

SPRINT Senior Care believes that implementing a vaccine verification program is critical to providing a safe workplace. Furthermore, the Chief Medical Officer of Health has announced, via [Directive #6](#), that COVID-19 vaccination policies are now mandatory for providers of community services, including SPRINT Senior Care.

The purpose of the policy is to safeguard the health of our staff and their families, our students, our volunteers, our clients and visitors, and the community at large, from COVID-19. SPRINT Senior Care believes that vaccination against COVID-19 provides the best protection from both the transmission and effects of the virus.

This policy is subject to change at any time, to ensure SPRINT Senior Care’s compliance with regulatory and public health guidelines regarding COVID-19 vaccination and industry best practice.

## ABOUT COVID-19:

COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus that was classified as a pandemic on March 11, 2020. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are known to cause respiratory infections in humans. In addition to COVID-19, novel coronaviruses include Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV). The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that as of December 3, 2021, there have been 263,563,622 cases of COVID-19 world-wide, and 5,232,562 deaths.

SPRINT Senior Care’s clients are particularly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19. A vast majority of the serious illnesses and deaths associated with COVID-19 in Ontario have been within the province’s elderly population.

Public Health Ontario advises that COVID-19 spreads through direct contact with respiratory droplets from someone who is infected with the virus (e.g., when they cough or sneeze). These droplets can spread up to 2 metres or 6 feet. A person could also get COVID-19 by touching a

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surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes. Asymptomatic infection, where people do not have symptoms but may transmit the virus, is also possible. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath and a number of other symptoms.

SPRINT Senior Care has implemented infection prevention practices to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19 infection including required Personal Protective Equipment, hand hygiene, screening, and other safety measures such as physical distancing and increased cleaning and disinfecting protocols. In addition, SPRINT Senior Care has worked collaboratively as part of the North Toronto Ontario Health Team to support vaccination of their staff and clients in line with the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI).

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us. Concerningly, COVID-19 case counts have been increasing and new variants of concern have emerged. The Ontario government has announced its intention to extend the operation of certain emergency orders until March 2022. We have also learned that breakthrough infections can cause serious harm or death to elderly or vulnerable persons who are fully vaccinated. Further, the expert advice we have received is that given the vulnerable population that we service, testing is not a substitute for vaccination; vaccines are highly effective; and since we serve a vulnerable population, the right and responsible action is to implement this mandatory vaccination policy.

### **COVID-19 VACCINATION:**

COVID-19 vaccines help protect us against both the transmission and the serious effects of the virus. They enhance the body's natural ability to fight infections. Vaccines prevent serious illness requiring hospitalization and serious illness resulting in death.

COVID-19 vaccines are overwhelmingly safe. Toronto Public Health notes that Canada has one of the best vaccine safety programs. Vaccines must pass many safety tests before they are considered to be safe for people. Health Canada authorizes vaccines only when there is sufficient scientific and clinical evidence that they are safe, effective, and are manufactured to the highest quality standard.

The Province of Ontario has rolled out a vaccination plan in which vaccines are available widely across Ontario for anyone who wants to be immunized. SPRINT Senior Care has facilitated first and second dose COVID-19 vaccinations through Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre for all staff and active volunteers.

### **POLICY:**

Effective immediately, all staff of SPRINT Senior Care are required to become fully vaccinated against COVID-19, subject at all times to the provisions of Ontario's *Human Rights Code*.

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Staff will have until end of business day on December 15, 2021, to provide the Human Resources Department with proof that they are fully vaccinated. Failure to meet this deadline without receiving a valid exemption will result in the staff being deemed to be non-compliant with this policy. Staff who have already provided SPRINT Senior Care with proof of vaccination are not required to do so again.

For the purposes of this policy, “fully vaccinated” means having received the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine or combination of COVID-19 vaccines approved by WHO (e.g., two doses of a two-dose vaccine series, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine series); and having received the final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days before December 15, 2021. In addition, fully vaccinated includes any future COVID-19 booster shots which the Government of Canada or other applicable health authority approves and includes in its definition of “fully vaccinated”, and which is available to staff.

#### **PROOF OF VACCINATION:**

Staff who have not already provided proof of vaccination to SPRINT Senior Care’s Human Resources Department must do so on or before December 15, 2021. Failure to provide valid documentation showing proof of vaccination status will be considered non-compliance with this policy.

#### **ACCOMMODATION EXEMPTION:**

Staff who object to becoming fully vaccinated on the basis of grounds protected under human rights legislation, are obligated to advise the Human Resources Department of the basis for such objection in writing and request an exemption from the strict application of this policy. A staff who seeks an exemption to the application of this policy will be required to provide reasonable supporting documentation as may be requested. Accommodation requests will be considered on an individual basis and reasonable accommodations, up to the point of undue hardship, will be provided only to the extent required by law.

It should be noted that given the nature of the SPRINT Senior Care’s work with vulnerable clients the only accommodation likely in many circumstances will be an unpaid leave of absence.

#### **TEMPORARY EXEMPTION:**

Any staff who are unvaccinated as of December 8, 2021 and who provide SPRINT Senior Care with proof of receiving their first vaccine dose by December 15, 2021, and sign and return to SPRINT Senior Care the required Attestation that they will receive their second dose on or before February 9, 2022 will not be placed on unpaid leave as of December 15, 2021. Those staff will be required to submit to COVID-19 testing as required by SPRINT Senior Care, until such time as those staff are fully vaccinated.

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### **STAFFING EXEMPTION:**

SPRINT Senior Care reserves the right to modify the strict application of this policy where essential client care and/or services could be compromised as a result of its effects. In those limited and exceptional circumstances, SPRINT Senior Care may, at its sole discretion, grant limited temporary exemptions to this policy to ensure that essential client care and/or service are not interrupted.

### **CONSEQUENCE OF NON-COMPLIANCE:**

Staff will be deemed to be non-compliant with this policy if they have not provided proof that they are fully vaccinated, or otherwise received an exemption to the application of this policy, by December 15, 2021.

Staff will face the following consequences for non-compliance:

- Failure of staff to comply with the requirements of this policy will result in the staff member being placed on temporary unpaid leave until such time as the staff member is deemed to have complied with the policy; or the staff member's employment has ended; or the policy is no longer in place.

### **OTHER SAFEGUARDS:**

All staff remain required to comply with any SPRINT Senior Care policies and procedures, as may be implemented or amended from time to time, regarding masking, physical distancing and other measures put in place to protect against the transmission of COVID-19 and its variants of concern, in accordance with public health guidance and legislation. For clarity, Ontario public health guidance and legislation continues to require mandatory masking, physical distancing, enhanced sanitation and daily screening.

### **EDUCATION AND RESOURCES:**

SPRINT Senior Care has developed an e-learning to provide staff with the most accurate and up-to-date information they need to make an informed decision regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. The module is based on a course developed by Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and we have modified the content to make it relevant for SPRINT Senior Care. This module is available upon request to all staff.

SPRINT Senior Care will also help to schedule vaccinations for staff who want to be vaccinated.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY:**

The collection of personal health information under this policy will be protected and limited only to those involved in the direct administration, follow-up, and surveillance of this policy's activities. Documentation confirming proof of vaccinations and/or exemptions will be kept strictly

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confidential in a secure file by Human Resources and will only be used for the purposes of implementing this policy, staffing, and meeting Public Health requirements.

Pursuant to Directive # 6 issued by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, SPRINT Senior care is required to report statistical information regarding COVID-19 vaccination of SPRINT Senior Care personnel to the Ontario Ministry of Health. No identifying information of SPRINT Senior Care personnel will be provided to the Ministry in relation to this policy; all statistical information will be provided in aggregate form – meaning that only numbers and no individual's choice or any individual information (for example, someone's name) will be included in the data required to be sent to the Ministry.

#### SOURCES:

Ontario Ministry of Health: [Directive #6](#)

City of Toronto: [COVID-19: Benefits of Getting Vaccinated – City of Toronto](#)

Public Health Ontario: [About Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | Public Health Ontario](#)

Province of Ontario: [How to book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment \(ontario.ca\)](#)

Province of Ontario: [Minister's Directive: Long-term care home COVID-19 immunization policy | Ontario.ca](#)

Province of Ontario: [Vaccines and immunization | Ontario.ca](#)

Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre: [Sunnybrook Hospital](#)

See Also:               800.1000       COVID-19: Eating While at Work  
                               800.1100       COVID-19 Pandemic Workplace Health & Safety