



## BOARD OF HEALTH

<b>SECTION:</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>APPROVED BY:</b>	<b>Board of Health</b>
<b>NUMBER:</b>	<b>BOH-HR-060</b>	<b>REVISED:</b>	<b>June 2024</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>October 7, 2021</b>		

# COVID-19 Board of Health Immunization Policy

### PREAMBLE:

As a health system organization, Southwestern Public Health (“SWPH”) recognizes the importance of immunization of all individuals who work in the organization and support the delivery of or who directly deliver services to clients. SWPH is committed to improving the health system, to creating a healthier community, to championing a culture of quality and safety, and to supporting the health and well-being of our employees, students, and volunteers.

COVID-19 is an acute respiratory illness caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus. It is characterized by fever, cough, shortness of breath and several other symptoms. Asymptomatic infection and subsequent transmission have been documented. COVID-19 is primarily transmitted person to person through respiratory droplets.

### SCOPE:

This policy applies to all members of the Board of Health for SWPH.

### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the parameters and expectations related to COVID-19 immunization, including the tracking of vaccinations received, the medical exemption process for those who have a medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccines, and the steps required for those who decline vaccination (or decline to disclose their vaccination status) to ensure that SWPH provides and maintains a safe work environment.

In consultation with the SWPH's Medical Officer of Health, vaccination against COVID-19 is strongly recommended for the following reasons:

1. To achieve high rates of COVID-19 vaccination and herd immunity in order to:
  - a) Protect clients who interact with and receive services from employees and volunteers of SWPH,
  - b) Protect SWPH employees and volunteers,
  - c) Protect colleagues and family including those who may be at high risk for serious health effects related to COVID-19 illness, and
  - d) Minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission among the workforce and protect SWPH's ability to provide its services to its clients and community.
2. To assist with determining and adjusting infection prevention and control practices and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needs.
3. To inform SWPH's continuity of operations plan and service delivery models. Knowledge of SWPH's vaccination rate will permit better decision making on resumption of programs and services.
4. To ensure that SWPH has a governing body that is ready and able to govern SWPH without interruption.

#### **POLICY:**

All Board of Health members who are governed by this policy are required to have completed one of the following actions:

- 1) Be fully vaccinated\* including eligible up-to-date booster doses for COVID-19 and provide valid proof of vaccination to SWPH Human Resources.

OR

- 2) Provide acceptable written proof of medical exemption from their physician or nurse practitioner to SWPH's Human Resources office that indicates:
  - a. That the person cannot be vaccinated against COVID-19 due to a documented medical reason,
  - b. The effective time period for the medical reason (i.e., permanent or time limited), and
  - c. Once the effective time period has expired (if applicable), provide evidence that steps have been taken to be vaccinated (in accordance with action 1 as set out above).

**NOTE A: As outlined by the Canadian College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPSO) on September 1, 2021, there are very few acceptable medical exemptions to the COVID-19 vaccination.**

## PROCEDURE:

- a) Board members are to submit Proof of Covid-19 vaccination to the Human Resources department via secure Laserfiche form, [C19BOHStatus](#).
- b) For those who cannot be vaccinated due to medical reason/contraindication, proof of this medical exemption must be provided by their physician or nurse practitioner indicating whether the medical exemption is permanent or time limited. If time-limited, the note must indicate how long it is expected to last. This medical exemption correspondence is to be submitted to the Human Resources department via secure Laserfiche form, [C19BOHStatus](#)
- c) For any new Board of Health members, members will be informed about this policy and the criteria set upon commencement of their term with SWPH. A copy of this policy will be included in all Board of Health correspondence at the point of commencement of their term as a member of SWPH. In addition, this policy will be as part of the Board of Health orientation for each new member.
- d) If an individual has received a vaccine in the province of Ontario, the only acceptable proof of vaccination is the receipt provided by the Ministry of Health. SWPH reserves the right to accept other forms of proof should they become available. For people who have been vaccinated outside of Ontario, acceptable proof is based on the criteria provided by the province/state in which they received their vaccine but only Government of Canada National Advisory Committee on Immunization NACI approved vaccines will be accepted. Proof shall include the person's name, date of birth, date of vaccination, vaccine name, lot number, and name of the health care practitioner administering the vaccine.
- e) A board member who does not have a copy of their vaccination receipt can download their COVID-19 vaccine receipt here: <http://covid19.ontariohealth.ca/>.
- f) Board of Health members who do not have an up-to-date health card, can contact the health unit that administered the vaccine for help in obtaining a copy of their vaccination receipt.
- g) Board of Health members that are not vaccinated may be subject to restrictions that do not apply to vaccinated personnel such as, but not limited to:
  - In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak, increased community transmission or at the discretion of the Chair of the Board of Health, non-vaccinated Board of Health members may not be able to perform their regular tasks. For those who are non-vaccinated without a medical exemption, they may need to be excluded from participation with Board of Health activity.

- h) SWPH will follow provincial guidelines to determine if Board of Health members are to be excluded from SWPH activities when meeting identified criteria (e.g., having a high-risk contact with a positive Covid-19 person, etc.). Board of Health restrictions may differ depending on the individual's vaccination status (partial or up-to-date vaccination).
- i) Board of Health individual vaccination status (i.e., partially vaccinated, up-to-date vaccination or medically exempt) will be kept confidential and tracked by Human Resources.
- j) Where Board of Health members have not complied with the above criteria, the Board Chair will be informed by Human Resources that the member has no recorded status. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board of Health to follow up with the individual to ensure they comply with this policy.

### **COLLECTION AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION:**

SWPH may collect statistics in relation to vaccination rates, total number of individuals covered by this policy, total number of individuals who have provided proof under each option as set out above, and other relevant information related to this policy. SWPH may also report this information to applicable government agencies and the public as required.

### **ENFORCEMENT:**

Any Board of Health member failing to adhere to this policy may impact the ability of the Board of Health member to provide governance of SWPH. As such, the following two steps as outlined in the Code of Conduct will be actioned:

- Request that the Board member resign; or
- Seek dismissal of the Board member based on regulations relevant as to how the Board member was appointed.

This policy and the consequences for breach of this policy will be applied in a manner which complies with the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, *Employment Standards Act*, *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, and any other applicable legislation.

SWPH reserves the right to amend this policy as may be necessary or appropriate.

### **RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

[C19BOHStatus](#)

NOTE: \* up-to-date vaccinations, including booster doses.

**COMPLIANCE:**

Non-compliance with this policy and any associated procedures may result in appropriate disciplinary measures.

**REVISION DATES:**

September 2022

June 2024 (addition of compliance and revision dates)