

MEDIA RELEASE

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Full vaccination required for KHSC health-care workers

KINGSTON, ONTARIO – In the face of the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, fueled by the more transmissible Delta variant, everyone who works, learns and volunteers at Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 22, 2021.

“As the tertiary hospital organization for southeastern Ontario, it is our ethical and professional duty to take this necessary step to protect the most vulnerable patients in the region, their families, and our staff from COVID-19,” says Elizabeth Bardon, Incident Commander for KHSC.

KHSC health-care workers who are not yet fully vaccinated have until Sept. 21 to receive their first dose and until Oct. 22 to receive their second dose. This phased approach ensures that anyone who has not yet been vaccinated has the necessary time to receive both doses.

In the meantime, with the provincial COVID-19 vaccination policy coming into effect today, at a minimum standard, all KHSC health-care workers who have not provided proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will be required to be tested for COVID-19 and demonstrate negative test results at least once every seven days. As well, KHSC continues to support unvaccinated staff with education on the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines.

The full vaccination requirement has already begun for students doing clinical placements at KHSC and any new hires.

“Going above and beyond the minimum vaccination standard set for high-risk health-care environments by Ontario’s chief medical officer of health is what we must do in order to reduce the risks associated with COVID-19 exposures and outbreaks, including death and quarantining units and staff,” says Bardon. “It’s important to remember that staff and patients who were not fully vaccinated were involved in the outbreak in July. Vaccinations save lives.”

She added that people in the region depend on KHSC for complex care for trauma and illnesses such as stroke, heart disease and cancer, and that “we must do whatever we can to ensure we continue to provide this specialty care to those who need us most.”

Currently, around 90 per cent of KHSC health-care workers are fully vaccinated. With this mandatory vaccination policy in place, along with screening, wearing personal protective equipment such as masks, and physical distancing, KHSC is doing everything it can to reduce transmission of the virus and prevent serious illness from COVID-19.

