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| PERSONNEL MANUAL  | **CHAPTER 5: occupational health and safety** |
| SECTION 5.20G Infection Prevention and Control Strategy: COVID-19 Mandatory Vaccination and Testing**Effective: Nov. 15, 2021****Revised: Sep. 2022****JOHSC Review: Sep. 2022** | Related Legislations/Policies: Hiring/Conditions of Employment/Continued Employment, Progressive Discipline, Personal Information Protection*Original signed***Executive Director’s Signature** |

**POLICY**

The health and safety of CHIRS staff and clients is a key strategic priority for the agency. CHIRS is committed to taking every reasonable precaution for the protection of workers and clients from COVID-19. Full vaccination has been shown to be effective in reducing COVID-19 virus transmission and in protecting vaccinated individuals from severe consequences of COVID-19 and COVID-19 variants. Due to the vulnerable nature of the clients who receive CHIRS’ services and the potential exposure in the community, COVID 19 vaccination is mandatory for all employees, students and volunteers (effective Jan 31, 2022).

As an additional element of precaution, CHIRS requires the completion of mandatory Rapid Antigen Screening testing on a regular basis (once per week minimum and twice per week for residential staff and those coming on site more frequently).

CHIRS reserves the right to change policy requirements based on guidance from the Ministry of Health, increases in COVID 19 cases in the community, outbreaks at CHIRS or other identified risk factors. This may include expansion of the vaccination requirement (i.e. booster) and increased testing frequency or changes to testing protocols. In the event of this change, CHIRS will provide adequate notice to provide employees, volunteers and students with reasonable time to comply.

**PURPOSE**

To outline COVID 19 vaccination and mandatory testing requirements

**SCOPE**

Applies to all employees, students, and volunteers

**DEFINITIONS**

**Employee** refers toany individual who is on the CHIRS payroll.

**COVID-19** is an acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It may be characterized by fever, cough, shortness of breath, and several other symptoms. Asymptomatic infection is also possible. The risk of severe disease increases with age but is not limited to the elderly and is elevated in those with underlying medical conditions.

**Accepted COVID-19 vaccines in Canada:**

* Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty, tozinameran, BNT 162b2)
* Moderna (mRNA-1273)
* AstraZeneca/COVIDSHIELD (ChAdOx1-S, Vaxzevria, AZD 1222)
* Janssen/Johnson & Johnson (Ad26.COV2.S)
* Novavax Nuvaxovid
* Medicago Covifenz

**Fully vaccinated** status refers to those who have received all required doses of any vaccine accepted in Canada and the fourteen (14) day period after the last dose has passed.

**Proof of Vaccination** refers to documentation verifying receipt of a vaccination series approved by Health Canada and submission of the completed CHIRS *COVID-19 Vaccination Status Verification* form.

**Rapid Antigen screening test** is a test used for screening purposes and cannot definitely confirm a diagnosis of acute COVID-19 infection (those showing symptoms). Testing does not prevent an individual from getting COVID-19. This type of testing does not require shipping a specimen to a laboratory for processing; results are produced within 15 to 20 minutes.

**Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR)** with a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab is a test used to diagnose COVID-19.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Employees are responsible for:**

* Ensuring that they have read and understand the expectations outlined in this policy and for seeking clarification as needed;
* Signing COVID 19 RAT attestation letters and testing as per the requirements outlined within;
* Adhering to all requirements and timeframes as outlined in this policy;
* Providing proof of vaccination to the Human Resources Manager within the directed timeframes.

**Supervisors are responsible for:**

* Ensuring that employees under their direction have reviewed the policy and have been provided with the opportunity to ask questions to facilitate their understanding of the expectations;
* Ensuring that employees adhere to testing frequency.
* Providing Rapid Antigen test kits to employees under their direction.
* Updating departmental Manager on non-adherence with respect to requirements and participating in follow-up as determined;
* Coordinating the coverage of shifts in the event that employees are absent from work due to non-adherence and/or isolation requirements.

**Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for:**

* Ensuring that all new students and volunteers have submitted proof of vaccination prior to commencing their placements;
* Forwarding proof of vaccination to the Human Resources Manager.

**Managers are responsible for:**

* Following up on non-adherence with respect to requirements;
* Meeting with employees who fail to adhere to requirements to review expectations and determining any further course of action;
* Determining the departmental process for collection/storing vaccination status or testing results of visitors.

**Human Resources Manager is responsible for:**

* Collecting and tracking employee vaccination status and verification documentation
* Tracking completion of COVID 19 RAT attestation letters and filing in employee personnel files.

**PROCEDURES**

**Communication**

This policy will be communicated to all employees, students, and volunteers in either hard copy or electronic format. It will also be made available to all clients, families, and their Substitute-Decision Makers directly and/or via the agency website.

**Proof of Vaccination**

Employment candidates, potential volunteers and students coming on site as part of the hiring process will be required to show proof of vaccination.

Candidates selected for employment and placements will be required to provide Human Resources with proof of vaccination along with completion of COVID 19 vaccination verification form as part of the hiring meeting.

**Mandatory Testing**

Candidates coming on site as part of the interview process will be required to provide a negative Rapid Antigen test result to the Human Resources Manager or designate. Rapid Antigen testing must be done the day before or the morning of the interview day.

All employees, volunteers and students will be provided with Rapid Antigen Test kits and be required to sign a COVID 19 Rapid Antigen Testing Attestation letter. Signed letters are retained in employee personnel files.

Anyone who tests positive as part of the regular testing, will isolate and inform their supervisor (or on call supervisor if after hours) and follow the directions provided (may include requirement of PCR test).

**Continued Compliance with all Health and Safety Precautions**

* Regardless of vaccination status, all established policies, procedures and protocols continue to remain in effect and must be followed (i.e. completing daily screening, wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), wearing face masks, maintaining appropriate physical distancing, self- monitoring of COVID-19 symptoms).
* CHIRS will continue to comply with current Ministry of Health (MOH) guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccines, testing and related applicable legislation.

**Consequences of Non-Compliance**

In accordance with CHIRS personnel policies, applicable legislation, employees who do not comply with requirements as set out within this policy will be subject to progressive discipline up to and including termination for cause.

**Statistical and Individual Information**

1. Upon request of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH), CHIRS will disclose the statistical information to the MOH in the manner and within the timeframe specified in the request. The statistical information outlined above may be disclosed by the MOH, including to the public, should the MOH elect to do so.
2. CHIRS will not disclose identifying information to the MOH regarding employees unless compelled to do so by law (i.e. in the event of an outbreak, for contact tracing purposes, etc.).
3. Individual personal health information will be kept confidential and shared only with those who are required to know in order to fulfil their responsibilities of this policy.

**RELEVANT FORMS**

COVID-19 Vaccination Status Verification

Ministry of Health vaccination receipts

COVID 19 Rapid Antigen Testing Attestation letter