



HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES' UNION

NEWSLETTER

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Vaccine timelines revised for long-term care, assisted living workers

PHO won't consider requests for exemptions other than for "medical contraindications"

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry has provided new timelines under which staff in the long-term care and assisted living sector can receive their vaccine and continue working at their site.

Workers who do not receive two doses of an approved vaccine by October 11 will now have an opportunity to continue their career in the LTC/AL sector if they commit to getting vaccinated under strict timelines. A summary of these timelines is included at the end of this newsletter.

New timelines

Under a new order issued October 4, the PHO says that workers who have received one dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine before October 12, can continue to work but must receive a second dose of the vaccine between 28 days and 35 days after their first dose.

Workers who have not received a vaccine dose as of October 11 cannot work in the sector as of October 12. But if they receive a first dose of the vaccine before October 26, they may work in the sector seven days after their first dose. They'll be required to receive their second dose within 28 and 35 days after their first to continue working.

Workers hired after October 11 and before October 26 can't work in the sector until seven days after their first dose, and must receive their second dose within 28 to 35 days. And all workers are subject to preventative measures including rapid testing on every shift until seven days after their second dose.

Facilities employers outline disciplinary measures

The Health Employers Association of B.C. has instructed its employer members (covered by the Facilities and other public sector agreements) to place workers who don't have their first dose by October 11 on a two-week unpaid leave of absence, and dismiss them if they refuse to get vaccinated during that period.

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HEABC also advises its employer members to place workers who refuse to get their second dose in the 35-day time frame on a two-week unpaid leave of absence, and dismiss them if they do not receive their second dose during this time.

It is not clear whether non-HEABC employers will follow the same advice.

PHO restricts exemption requests to medical reasons

In the same order, the PHO clarified that her office would not consider any request for exemptions to the vaccine order except in cases of a medical contraindication to the vaccine.

Workers who have made an application for a medical exemption as set out in the PHO order can continue to work (subject to rapid testing on every shift) until their request is responded to by the PHO or a medical health officer. The application requirements are set out in the Order.

Please refer to Section L on page 13 of the Order for more details.

Members who have questions about the timelines or exemptions should contact a shop steward who will be working with a union staff representative to address outstanding issues.

LTC/AL outbreaks in every health authority

As of October 4, the Ministry of Health was reporting COVID-19 outbreaks in 20 health care facilities, mostly in long-term care. The outbreaks impact every health authority.

Starting this week, third doses of the vaccine are being administered to long-term care and assisted living residents.

The vast majority of HEU members have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

HEU members who still have questions about the vaccine are encouraged to seek out credible sources of information including from their primary health care provider, health authority or the BC Centre for Disease Control (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine>).

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HEU strongly encourages members to get vaccinated if medically able. Getting vaccinated will help protect residents, co-workers, families and communities.

Summary of new measures contained in October 4 PHO order (LTC/AL):

No dose on October 11

- Not permitted to work in LTC/AL on October 12
- Can return to work in sector seven days after receiving a first dose (must receive first dose by October 25)
- Must receive second dose 28-35 days after first dose to continue working after 35 days
- Must mask and receive rapid test on every shift until seven days after second dose

One dose on or before October 11

- Can continue to work in sector October 12
- Must receive second dose 28-35 days after first dose to continue working after 35 days
- Must mask and receive rapid test on every shift until seven days after second dose

Two doses on or before October 11

- Can continue to work in sector October 12
- Must receive rapid test on every shift until seven days after second dose

Hired after October 11 and before October 26

- Must have first dose
- Must receive second dose 28-35 days after first dose to continue working after 35 days
- Must mask and receive rapid test on every shift until seven days after second dose

Hired after October 25

- Must be vaccinated – two doses plus seven days – before starting work in LTC/AL