

**To:** All staff & physicians  
**From:** Gail Lebel, VP & Chief Human Resource Officer  
**Date:** Oct 8, 2021  
**Re:** **Amendments to the Vaccination Policy for GNB Employees**

As you know, the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy for Government of New Brunswick (GNB) employees took effect on September 7, 2021. Yesterday we received an amendment to the GNB Vaccination Policy which is communicated below.

Horizon is committed to the health and safety of its employees, physicians, volunteers, patients, and clients. The GNB policy, developed in consultation with Public Health, contributes to our fight against COVID-19 and unites us in our common mission to ensure the wellbeing of all New Brunswick.

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As part of the ongoing effort to ensure the safety of GNB workplaces for employees and members of the public, Cabinet has approved the following amendments to the vaccination policy for employees in Parts I, II, III and IV effective October 8, 2021:

### **1. Mandatory vaccines**

- Health care workers will have six weeks (until November 19, 2021) to provide Employee Health Services or their designate with proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 if they have not already done so. This six-week period provides sufficient time to receive two doses.

**Note:** During the six-week notice period, health care workers who have not provided proof of full vaccination will still be required to complete rapid testing three times per week and wear a mask at all times when at work.

- A health care worker (without a valid medical exemption for the COVID-19 vaccine supported by a medical certificate) who has not provided proof of full vaccination by November 19, 2021 **will be placed on leave without pay.**

## **2. Leave for unvaccinated health care workers when isolating during six-week notice period**

Public Health requires unvaccinated individuals to self-isolate while waiting for their COVID-19 test result if they have two or more symptoms or when they have been in close contact with a COVID-19 case.

Therefore, during the six-week notice period, **unvaccinated health care workers** (without a valid medical exemption supported by a medical certificate) who must isolate because either:

- they have two or more symptoms and are waiting for their test result; or
- they were directed by Public Health to isolate because they have been in close contact with a COVID-19 case **will be placed on leave without pay for the duration of their isolation period.**

Early in the pandemic, GNB directed that health care workers be placed on paid leave when required to self-isolate by Public Health because circumstances were largely beyond the health care worker's control. Now, with the introduction of vaccines, health care workers do control whether they will be required to self-isolate under certain circumstances. Absences due to the refusal to get vaccinated are avoidable and create unnecessary strain on our operations and work colleagues.

Please note that emergency leave provisions in collective agreements and non-bargaining policies will not apply in these isolation cases during the six-week period since the health care worker's isolation is not an unexpected event given current circumstances and is due to the health care worker's personal choice not to be vaccinated. It is within the health care worker's control (except for the medically exempt) to get vaccinated and avoid potential isolation periods following close contact with COVID-19 cases.

Similarly, quarantine leave provisions will not apply. It is within the health care worker's control to get vaccinated and avoid potential isolation periods following close contact with COVID-19 cases.

Vacation leave and the use of banked overtime will not apply either since they have to be pre-approved by the supervisor subject to operational requirements.

Paid sick leave will only apply if the health care worker is sick and the health care worker provides a supporting medical note.

If Public Health adds other circumstances where unvaccinated persons would be required to isolate while vaccinated persons would not, the same directive will apply.

The [GNB site for the vaccination policy](#) will be updated soon to reflect these amendments to the policy.

The vaccines work, as demonstrated by the fact that the vast majority of new COVID-19 cases are contracted by unvaccinated individuals. I implore all who are still unvaccinated without medical exemption to get vaccinated as soon as possible. We all need to do our part to help reduce the risk of spreading the virus to vulnerable and youth populations and the number of hospitalizations which are interrupting or reducing other important medical care.