

***Statement by Health Association Nova Scotia Continuing Care Council
Regarding Employee COVID-19 Vaccination***

The Continuing Care Council is the representative body of Health Association Nova Scotia's Continuing Care and Disability Support Program members. This includes 96% of the licensed nursing homes in the province and some DHW funded RCFs; almost 100% of the publicly funded home care organizations; and all Adult Residential Centres and Regional Rehabilitation Centres.

The Continuing Care Council strongly promotes vaccination to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and keep others safe. We commend the leadership being taken by providers across Nova Scotia's continuing care and disability support program sectors to encourage their employees to get vaccinated against COVID-19. They are supporting employees' access to the vaccine, providing education, and sharing information from credible sources to help employees make evidence-based decisions regarding vaccination.

Although providers continuously champion vaccination within their organizations, we know that it may not be right for some people due to medical circumstances. Others may choose not to for personal reasons. That is why providers will continue to maintain the many precautionary measures that have been put in place – the highest standards of infection prevention and control; screening protocols; and adherence to public health directives, such as masking, practicing good hand hygiene, and social distancing. Vaccination is an added layer of protection in addition to these measures and they will remain in place even after vaccine is widely available to all Nova Scotians.

We recognize that some residents, clients and families served by the continuing care and DSP sectors may have questions about vaccination status and the delivery of care. We appreciate these concerns. It is important to understand, however, that we rely on the contributions of all employees to ensure the delivery of safe, person-centred care. For residents receiving facility-based care, these collective efforts are also fundamental to promoting a home environment. Additionally, the people who work in long term care, home care, and adult residential centres/regional rehabilitations care about the residents and clients they serve. They provide the highest standard of care and often go above and beyond to make a positive difference in people's lives. It is truly a collective effort.

In consideration of the above, providers are not able to entertain requests for assignment of staff based on vaccination status. Notwithstanding this, please keep in mind that this is an evolving situation. There may be changes in the way that vaccination is considered as part of a safe workplace in the future. Meanwhile, please be assured that the continuing care and DSP sectors remain committed to strictly adhering to the public health measures described above. Protecting the health and safety of our residents, clients, employees and families is our top priority.