



January 16, 2025

To: CCN Board of Directors

From: Trish

RE: Recommendation regarding agency COVID Vaccination Policy

## **Backgrounder**

Over the past seven months staff have been working on a lengthy process to update our agency COVID Vaccination Policy. This report outlines my recommendation regarding the policy and also the consultation and engagement that was completed to reach the conclusion that is recommended.

## **Recommendation**

*To archive the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and include revised wording in our Immunization Policy to reference COVID-19 Vaccinations.*

*Wording example – **COVID-19 Vaccinations although not mandatory, it is strongly recommended that all individuals covered by the policy receive all doses allowed according to provincial eligibility to stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines based on guidance from Health Canada and/or Public Health Ontario.***

***In the event of COVID-19 outbreaks, CCN will consider measures which may include, but are not limited to: masking, vaccination where appropriate and available, work reassignment when appropriate and following public health recommendations as applicable.***

## **Process undertaken to reach the recommendation**

While reviewing CCN policies it was determined that the current COVID-19 Vaccination Policy P-HS-12 was out of date. The Senior Management Team discussed the current policy with Josh Landry – Ethicist, to determine how best to proceed. It was decided to move the discussion forward using a tool from **our Integrated Ethics Framework – Accountability for Reasonableness (A4R) ethical decision-making framework**. This work would be assigned to the Health and Safety Committee which represents a good cross section of employees from various programs of CCN.



## Accountability at Community Care Northumberland

The ethical decision-making framework called “**accountability for reasonableness**” or “**A4R**” can help decision makers throughout the organization set priorities, and reach decisions that are legitimate and fair. The A4R should be used in collaboration with the CCN Mission, Vision, and Values.

### CCN Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission:

*To connect our communities to the support, service and care they need throughout their lifelong journey.*

Vision:

*A community where people experience connection and well-being*

Values:

**Relationships:** *we enter each relationship with care, ensuring equity, respect, and collaboration.*

**Accountability:** *we approach our work with integrity while balancing the voices of the people, community, and funders.*

**Community:** *we are engaged partners and together we celebrate our strengths and respond to the needs of our community.*

**Compassion:** *we deliver meaningful services supporting dignity and belonging through empathy, collaboration, and inclusivity.*

### Why do we need an ethical framework for decision-making?

An ethical framework is designed to help decision makers reflect on these three key questions that are central to making practical and fair priority-setting decisions in healthcare: *what should we do, why should we do it, and how should it be done?*

The Health and Safety committee went through the following steps.

1. Identified what the goals of the decision making will be for this project, and what prompted the discussion/need.
  - It was agreed that the goal of the project was to ‘Update the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy’.
  - The group determined that there were several extenuating factors in this discussion but would make every effort to stay true to the ‘goal’.
  - The discussion was prompted by;
    - 1.1 Out-of-date policy



1.2 Questions from potential staff and volunteers as to what our current policy is regarding COVID-19 Vaccinations.

1.3 Changes in direction from Public Health & Ministry of Health

2. Identify who the stakeholders are and how we would include them in decision making.
- Roundtable discussion with all Health and Safety Committee members on their experiences at work with fellow co-workers, volunteers, clients, and family members.

Stakeholder Group	Impact on COVID Vaccine Requirement	
	Pro	Con
<b>Volunteers</b>		Enforcement of vaccine policy
	Effect on Recruitment	Effect on Recruitment
	Moral Code	Moral Code
	Safety	
<b>Clients/Family</b>		
	Safety	
<b>Employees</b>		
	Safety	
	Less sick time	Recruitment Efforts
	Promote culture of caring for others health	Enforcement of vaccine policy
<b>Partners</b>	Neutral	neutral
<b>Third Party Contractors/Students</b>		
		Enforcement of vaccine policy

**Additional Considerations**

- Currently no provincial mandate or direction enforcing COVID-19 Vaccinations on any sector of the population as there was when the CCN policy was first implemented and approved.
- Current CCN Influenza Vaccination policy wording is that the vaccine is strongly encouraged and has limitations on working in an environment where there is an influenza outbreak.



- Current Public Health has no guidance available other than when access to vaccination clinics. Testing kits are no longer available by the Health Unit and the Provincial Government is not providing them free of charge anymore.
3. How is the decision being made – What is our decision-making procedure?
- The committee decided that they would canvass partner organization to understand what they were doing in response to any changes in COVID Vaccination policies.
  - 16 partner organizations were identified – Health Care, Social Services, Recreational Organizations.

**Results of Community Consultations**

	Strongly Encourage	Require
Long Term Care	3	
Hospice Residence	1	2
Ontario Health @ Home (under review)		1
Community Support Service	5	
Hospital	1	1
Recreational Org		1
Primary Health Care	1	
TOTAL (16 Community Partners)	11	5

4. Recommendation

After reviewing our stakeholder impact, the enforceability of the current policy, results of our community consultations, the Health and Safety Committee recommendation is: **To archive the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy and include revised wording in our Immunization Policy to reference COVID-19 Vaccinations.**

**Wording example – COVID-19 Vaccinations although not mandatory, it is strongly recommended that all individuals covered by the policy receive all doses allowed according to provincial eligibility to stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines based on guidance from Health Canada and/or Public Health Ontario.**

**In the event of COVID-19 outbreaks, CCN will consider measures which may include, but are not limited to: masking, vaccination where appropriate and available, work reassignment when appropriate and following public health recommendations as applicable. (recommendation from Volunteer Committee).**



5. This recommendation went back to the Health & Safety Committee for feedback (below) and then sent on to identified relevant stakeholders.

The Health and Safety Committee recommended one small wording change in the recommendation stated above. Unanimous agreement of this recommendation to go to three identified stakeholders for their feedback.

- Ed's House Medical Director
- CCN Volunteer Committee
- One third party contractor – Extendicare Cobourg

Feedback is requested to be received by mid January if possible so a recommendation can be presented to the CCN Board meeting on 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **Feedback Received.**

#### CCN Volunteer Committee

It has been almost five years since Covid-19 appeared and a review was definitely in order. There is no harm in continuing the phrase "strongly recommend" and leave any mandates to the provincial guidelines.

If the agency were to make vaccinations mandatory it could have a negative impact on retention of current volunteers and staff.

Under section 4, Recommendations, would we want to consider adding "and following public health recommendations as applicable" to the final paragraph?

If this becomes mandatory than CCN will need to look at costs, i.e. who is paying for test kits. (this refers to any measures we need to put in place if there is a COVID outbreak.

All volunteers in the committee have agreed with the "strong recommendation" for the COVID-19 policy. One volunteer has stated they have two doses and have no plans to get more, while another one has 7 doses and plan to get their 8th.

#### Ed's House Medical Director

No feedback was received from the Medical Director.

#### Extendicare Cobourg

Verbal feedback will be presented at the Board meeting.