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Medical Officers of
Health (COMOH) is a
Section of*



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the public health units
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Ontario

Ontario Association of
Public Health Dentistry

Ontario Association of
Public Health Nursing
Leaders

Ontario Dietitians in
Public Health

August 24, 2021

Att'n: All University Presidents
(Updated August 26, 2021)
c/o Steve Orsini, President and CEO
Council of Ontario Universities,
180 Dundas St West, Suite 1800,
Toronto, ON M5G 1Z8

Att'n: All College Presidents
c/o Linda Franklin, President & CEO
Colleges Ontario
130 Queens Quay East, Suite 606
Toronto, ON M5A 0P6

Dear University Presidents and College Presidents,

Re: Vaccine Policies at Ontario Universities and Colleges

On behalf of the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health (COMOH), which represents the Medical Officers and Associate Medical Officers of Health in all 34 public health units across the province, I am writing to express our strong support for COVID-19 vaccination policies in all Ontario universities and colleges. This letter is our collective recommendation to Ontario universities and colleges. We consulted with the office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Kieran Moore.

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted post-secondary campuses and their surrounding communities. The risk of COVID-19 has been highlighted by outbreaks among post-secondary students, both on and off campus. Furthermore, in Ontario, the age cohort with the highest cumulative number of cases has been amongst those who are students at post-secondary institutions, specifically aged 20-29. Unfortunately, vaccination uptake amongst the general population within this age group has plateaued.

The virus will continue to circulate this fall and it is important to create the conditions that will allow students to return to in person education and the post-secondary sector to operate with appropriate public health measures in place during the covid pandemic.

On August 17, 2021, the Chief Medical Officer of Health indicated that mandatory vaccination policies will be required for post-secondary institutions, with specific minimum requirements. As post-secondary institutions continue to develop these policies and to ensure a safer return to campus this September, the Council of Medical Officers of Health strongly recommends that:

- Full vaccination against COVID-19 be required for all individuals involved in any in-person activities on campus (students, staff, faculty, contractors, and visitors), with the rare exception of those individuals who cannot be vaccinated due to permitted exemptions (medical and other protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code). Individuals are to be required to submit proof of vaccination.
- All individuals who are unvaccinated due to permitted exemptions or who are awaiting their second dose be required to adhere to additional health and safety measures, up to and including serial and frequent rapid testing.

- Individuals involved in any in-person activities on campus (students, staff, faculty, contractors, and visitors) should be fully vaccinated as soon as operationally feasible.

Vaccination against COVID-19 is the single most effective public health measure to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Its inclusion among the other public health measures (including physical distancing, capacity limits, and indoor mask use) is essential in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rapid testing protocols are not preventive and are not a replacement for immunization and should be used only in instances where vaccination is not possible.

High vaccine uptake in Ontario, including amongst post-secondary communities, will be essential to ensure a safe and healthy autumn. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the wellbeing of students, staff, and faculty, and your support of the pandemic response in Ontario.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "C. Gardner".

Dr. Charles Gardner
Chair, Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health

COPY: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health