September 2, 2021

Dear Fairview Parkwood Communities residents and family members,

The Board of Directors and I wish to express how profoundly grateful we are for our team members’ dedication to providing the best possible care for residents during the pandemic. By following infection, prevention and control protocols and being tested, team members helped to safeguard residents, each other, and all our families from COVID-19.

Vaccines have now provided an additional, safe and highly effective line of defense. Medical experts in Ontario, Canada and beyond have studied the vaccines and concluded they prevent serious illness, hospitalization and worse. It is encouraging to see that the vaccines are highly effective with the more contagious and dangerous ‘delta’ variant. The majority of cases are among the unvaccinated.

We have made tremendous efforts to educate and encourage team members of the benefits of vaccination. However, there remains a small percentage of staff who have declined vaccination.

The safety of residents and staff is our primary concern. We are obliged under the Long-Term Care Homes Act, Retirement Homes Act to keep residents safe. We are also responsible under health and safety laws to take every reasonable precaution to protect staff. Canada’s Public Health officials, as well as our federal and provincial governments unanimously agree that our best option in the face of this pandemic is to get vaccinated.

With this in mind, Fairview Parkwood Communities’ Board of Directors met to consider how we can best ensure we are meeting our legal and ethical obligations. The Board members and I have consulted with our lawyer and reviewed the Charter rights of Canadians ([Section 7 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](https://www.canlii.org/en/ca/laws/stat/schedule-b-to-the-canada-act-1982-uk-1982-c-11/latest/schedule-b-to-the-canada-act-1982-uk-1982-c-11.html)) and our legal and ethical responsibilities.

I want to share that the Board has now approved a new policy, effective October 31, 2021, making COVID-19 vaccination mandatory (proof must be shown) as a condition of continued employment, and as a condition of continued access to our homes for students and volunteers. The only exemption is written proof of a medical reason. This aligns with our values and responsibilities.

We did not make this decision lightly and we are not the first to implement a mandated vaccination policy. Recently, a [coalition of national seniors’ living operators](https://www.globenewswire.com/news-release/2021/08/26/2287186/0/en/Seniors-Care-Coalition-to-Require-Mandatory-Vaccination-for-Long-Term-Care-and-Retirement-Home-Staff.html), led by Chartwell, Extendicare, Responsive Group, Revera and Sienna, announced a similar mandate with similar consequences for refusing vaccination for non-medical reasons. The [Ontario Long-Term Care Association](https://twitter.com/OLTCAnews/status/1425087829730807811/photo/1), the [Canadian Association for Long-Term Care](https://caltc.ca/2021/08/caltc-supports-mandating-covid-19-vaccines/) and [AdvantAge](https://www.advantageontario.ca/AAO/Content/NewsReleases/Statement_Vaccines_Healthcare_August2021.aspx) all support vaccine mandates.

It is our goal to encourage everyone to be fully vaccinated. We continue to provide education, guidance and support to help each team member feel comfortable with their decision and make it as easy as possible to get vaccinated.

Please note that, although strongly recommended, essential caregivers and visitors are not required to be vaccinated, at present. We ask residents and families to consider making it your own personal policy not to have guests in the home who are not fully vaccinated, for everyone’s safety. From a leadership perspective we will continue to monitor this practice.

As partners in care, we continue to strive to do everything we possibly can to keep our residents and team safe. Thank you for your support and understanding. Please reach out to the Executive Directors of the Campus (Fairview or Parkwood) if you have any questions.

In kindness,

Elaine Shantz, CEO