



Mandatory Vaccination Policy For Hospital Visitors, Essential Caregivers / Care Partners Will Take Effect October 15th At All Renfrew County Hospitals

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 23, 2021**

To help curb the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the safety of those requiring hospital care, hospitals in Renfrew County will be aligning with others in the Champlain region to implement a mandatory vaccination policy for hospital visitors, essential caregivers and/or care partners effective October 15th.

The policy has been developed in consultation with the Renfrew County and District Health Unit and does not apply to those long-term care homes affiliated with hospitals in the region.

“We recognize the difficulty this may pose for some individuals, however, given the transmission risk of the Delta variant in particular, it’s a step hospitals are taking in order to help ensure the safety of those in our care and in our buildings,” said Pembroke Regional Hospital President and CEO Pierre Noel, adding that hospitals in the Champlain region view this as alignment with Ontario’s new proof of vaccination program.

When the policy comes into effect, those who are not fully vaccinated will not be permitted to enter the hospitals unless they qualify under a limited number of exceptions. The public will be asked to visit the hospital websites to see if they qualify under outlined exceptions for a specific facility.

“Throughout the pandemic, we have worked with our regional partners to align many policies and practices. This approach has been successful in achieving our goals of maintaining the safety of our patients, families, staff and physicians as well as ensuring consistent messaging,” said Julia Boudreau, President and CEO of Renfrew Victoria Hospital and St. Francis Memorial Hospital. “We also recognize that many patients and families travel between the hospitals in our region. As such, we feel it is important that our visiting policies be as consistent as possible so when visitors arrive at any facility, they will know what to expect,” Ms. Boudreau said.

The new policy for hospital visitors, essential caregivers and/or care partners also follows implementation of mandatory vaccination policies for hospital staff, physicians, volunteers and students.

“As health care workers continue to work incredibly hard to care for their communities, hospitals across the province are implementing measures such as mandatory visitor vaccination policies to protect our health care workforce and enhance the safety of all those who work in and visit hospitals,” said Janna Hotson, President and CEO of Deep River and District Hospital.

“Ensuring that mandatory vaccination requirements are in place for visitors, essential caregivers and/or care partners across the hospitals in Renfrew County reflects the efforts being taken by hospitals across Ontario to ensure our facilities remain safe environments for our healthcare workforce, and those we provide care for,” she said.

While the move to mandatory vaccination will now cover members of the health care team and those coming into hospitals in a visitor or caregiver/care partner capacity, all hospitals want to reassure residents that, regardless of vaccination status, no one will be denied care or service.

“Our focus is to do everything possible to provide a safe and healthy environment at Arnprior Regional Health (ARH),” said Eric Hanna, ARH President and CEO. “This new policy aligns with the provincial vaccination certificate program and builds on our mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for staff, physicians, students and volunteers that was put in place in early September. Together, these policies add another important layer of protection.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Heather Coughlin, Renfrew Victoria Hospital / St. Francis Memorial Hospital
heather@pappin.com

Amy Joyce, Deep River and District Hospital
amy.joyce@drdh.org

Carolyn Levesque, Pembroke Regional Hospital
carolyn.levesque@prh.email

Melissa McDermott, Arnprior and District Memorial Hospital
melissa@melissamcdermott.ca