

COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for designated care partners at Headwaters

By **Sam Odrowski**

COVID -19 vaccinations are now mandatory for all designated care partners entering Headwaters Health Care Centre.

The new rule came into effect on Tuesday, December 21.

"To keep everyone that works and receives care here safe, effective December 21, 2021 all designated care partners coming to our hospital will need to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 (received both doses 14 days prior to coming to the hospital), or have a documented medical exemption for not being vaccinated, or be ineligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine," said Headwaters in a recent press release.

Screeners located at the hospital's Emergency Department or Ambulatory Care Entrance will ask to see proof of vaccination or medical exemption as well as government issued ID (such as a Driver's License) to gain entry.

They will also screen for symptoms of COVID-19 before designated care partners will be able to enter Headwaters Health Care Centre.

In light of the new Omicron variant, the hospital has implemented restrictive visitation.

This includes permitting only one designated care partner for when patients are at the end of their life (deemed as within two weeks), has a life altering or critical illness (such as trauma), in active labour, a mental health crisis or for pediatric care of a child under 18.

"We will not be permitting designated care partners to accompany outpatients for appointments except in special circumstances where a support person is necessary," the hospital stated.

"We will not be permitting designated care partners in our Emergency Department, unless in exceptional circumstances where a support person is necessary for a minor, persons with disabilities or cognitive challenges or those requiring special assistance, such as language translation."

Qualifying designated care partners are asked to wear a medical grade mask and practice physical distancing and hand hygiene.

The visits must be pre-scheduled by calling the inpatient unit at Headwaters no later than 4:30 p.m. the day before the visit. A full list of the hospital's infection prevention and control measures as well as eligibility criteria for visiting can be found at headwatershealth.ca/Resources under the Coronavirus (COVID-19) tab.

"We appreciate each of our visitors and the critical role they play in supporting those we serve. We are committed to reopening our doors to our families and caregivers once it is safe to do so. We also have virtual options to help keep people connected including an e-card, that can be delivered directly to the patient by a member of our team," said Headwaters. "Thank you for your patience and understanding."