

# COVID-19 UPDATE

## Keeping You Safe



To: All Staff, Professional Staff, Learners, and Volunteers

From: Ron Turner, on behalf of Dr. Peter Voros, EVP In-Patient Care Programs

Date: August 11, 2021

**RE: TBRHSC Supports Ontario Hospital Association's Call on Unvaccinated to Protect Themselves**

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As the health and safety of all staff, professional staff, patients, care partners and the community is our utmost priority, the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) supports the OHA's media statement of August 4, 2021 below:

### **Ontario Hospital Association Calls on Unvaccinated to Protect Themselves**

#### **Unvaccinated Ontarians Facing Much Higher Risk of Hospitalization and Death from Delta Variant**

**August 4, 2021, TORONTO, ON –** “With summer drawing to a close, and colder, shorter days on the horizon, the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) is calling on all unvaccinated Ontarians to take immediate steps to protect themselves from heightened risk of infection, hospitalization and even death this fall and winter from the Delta COVID-19 variant.

Last week, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Kieran Moore, said there are about 1.8 million eligible Ontarians who have not yet received their second shot of the COVID-19 vaccine. Given that it takes two weeks after the second vaccination to develop immunity, it’s vital for Ontarians to get their first and second dose as soon as possible so that protections are in place before the start of the school year and the return of colder weather when more time will be spent indoors.

The risk of a fourth wave among unvaccinated Ontarians is a real threat, particularly in the face of the highly contagious Delta variant – which spreads more efficiently than other strains. Last Friday, Dr. Michael Ryan, Executive Director of the World Health Organization Health Emergencies Programme, said ‘We are fighting the same virus but a virus that has become fitter and better adapted to transmitting amongst us humans.’

Other jurisdictions around the world, including the United States, have seen a rapid surge in new COVID-19 cases in recent weeks, concentrated in areas with low vaccination rates. On July 16, Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control in the United States warned that ‘this is becoming a pandemic of the unvaccinated,’ and urged everyone to get fully vaccinated as soon as possible.

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Given that thousands of Ontario children under the age of 12 will be returning to indoor in-person learning in just a few weeks, it's vital that all eligible residents receive both shots to keep transmission levels low, protect vulnerable populations and ensure that access to non-COVID related hospital services is not disrupted a further time.

The OHA strongly recommends that every unvaccinated Ontarian speak with their family physician if they have questions about the safety or efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine. This pandemic is ending but a fourth wave could still inflict a deadly toll on the unvaccinated. Ontario has seen too much unnecessary suffering and death in this pandemic. If you are unvaccinated, please act immediately to protect your own health and safety and get your COVID-19 vaccination right away."

- Anthony Dale, President and CEO, Ontario Hospital Association

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For more information about vaccine options available in the District of Thunder Bay, please visit <https://www.tbdhu.com/covidclinics>.

Once you have received your vaccine, please ensure to forward a copy of your vaccination receipt to Occupational Health and Safety at [ohs@tbeh.net](mailto:ohs@tbeh.net).

Thank you to all those who have already received both doses of the vaccine in order to help protect yourself and others from the spread of COVID-19. Your commitment to health and safety is much appreciated.

All Hospital COVID-19 updates and resources are available on the iNtranet at <https://comms.tbrhsc.net/covid-19-information/>.