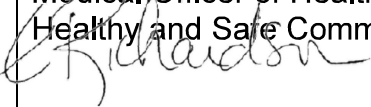


INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 3, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Efficacy of the Existing Staff COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (BOH23015) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Dr. Bart Harvey (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3571
SUBMITTED BY:	Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health, Public Health Services Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

At its meeting on February 8, 2023, Council provided the direction below:

That the Medical Officer of Health provide a report to Council, by end of Q2 2023, on the efficacy of the existing staff vaccination policy that includes a recommendation on whether to:

- Renew the policy in its current form;
- Update the policy;
- Remove the policy for all or certain parts of the organization; or,
- Any other recommendation that the Medical Officer of Health sees fit to make.

This report details the response to the direction above, and fulfils the requirement for General Issues Committee Outstanding Business List Item 2023-G.

INFORMATION

The Medical Officer of Health and Public Health Services provide advice to Council and the community on public health matters, including vaccination. Specific occupational health and safety advice, including vaccination policies for staff, is provided by the Occupational Health & Safety team within Human Resources. Previous reports on the issue of COVID-19 vaccination policies for staff have been provided to Council through the Executive Director of Human Resources.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**SUBJECT: Efficacy of the Existing Staff COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (BOH23015)
(City Wide) - Page 2 of 3**

This information report provides further public health perspective on COVID-19 vaccination policies at this point in the pandemic.

Current evidence indicates that vaccination against COVID-19 provides protection against the severe effects of COVID-19 infection, but has little, if any, effect against the risk of being infected by COVID-19. As such, vaccination against COVID-19 is currently believed to have no effect against the transmission of the virus between people but will decrease the severity of a COVID-19 infection.

As a result, from an employer's perspective, vaccination against COVID-19 will not affect the risk of employees becoming infected with COVID-19 or of transmitting the virus to co-workers. However, vaccination against COVID-19 would be expected to decrease the risk of employees experiencing severe consequences when infected with COVID-19. As such, employees vaccinated against COVID-19 would be expected to be off work for shorter periods of time because of a COVID-19 infection and would also be expected to be less likely to require care in-hospital.

From a public health perspective, given that vaccination against COVID-19, even with keeping vaccinations up to date, does not reduce COVID-19 disease transmission, the individual level benefits would not justify the imposition of a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for employees, existing or new, except as required by any provincial guidance or mandate. At this point in time there is no provincial requirement for vaccination against COVID-19 for any staff.

Conclusion

Taking into account each of the perspectives above, the Medical Officer of Health recommends:

1. Pausing all COVID-19 vaccine provisions provided for in the Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccine Verification Policy for new staff, existing staff, and staff working in all divisions; and,
2. Suspension of rapid antigen screen testing for asymptomatic staff.

Nonetheless, to support the health and wellness of staff, and reduce pressures on both City of Hamilton services and health care agencies, strong support and encouragement of vaccination against COVID-19 remains important.

As the COVID-19 virus and pandemic continue to evolve, these circumstances may change, and thus continued monitoring of the situation is advisable. Situation monitoring and subsequent decisions related to employee policies is a role that will continue to fall to Occupational Health & Safety within Human Resources to provide ongoing occupational health and safety advice to the corporation, including staff vaccination recommendations. Public Health Services will continue to provide advice to the

**SUBJECT: Efficacy of the Existing Staff COVID-19 Vaccination Policy (BOH23015)
(City Wide) - Page 3 of 3**

community on COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures, including vaccination.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not Applicable.