



THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF KINCARDINE

Subject: COVID-19 Vaccination Policy - 90 Day Review

Report Number: Human Resources-2022-02

Meeting Date: Monday, January 24, 2022

Recommendation: THAT Council approve the updated COVID-19 Vaccination Policy as presented

Date to be considered by Council: Monday, January 24, 2022

Report Summary:

The Municipality of Kincardine values the health and safety of every individual and is committed to building, and maintaining, a safe and healthy work environment. A Vaccination Policy was implemented on November 15, 2021, which had a requirement for employees to disclose Vaccination Status with the obligation for completion of an education program and regular testing depending on their indicated status. The policy also established a 90 Day Review period to re-evaluate the policy for application and relevancy. Since the implementation of the policy, there have been a number of updates from the provincial government and Public Health that will impact the application of the current policy. This report provides an overview of the impacts and recommends changes to the Vaccination policy.

Origin: COVID-19 Pandemic

Existing Policy: GG 6.17 - Vaccination Policy

Background/Analysis:

The Municipality of Kincardine values the health and safety of every individual, and is committed to building, and maintaining, a safe and healthy work environment. As an employer, the Municipality is obligated under the Occupational Health & Safety Act to take all reasonable precautions necessary to protect the health and safety of its workers.

Throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Municipality of Kincardine has taken all necessary precautions and implemented workplace protocols in accordance with the direction and advice of the Public Health Unit and the provincial government.

On November 15, 2021, in alignment with the recommendation from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Council approved a Vaccination Policy which required new and existing employees to declare their vaccination status. If employees declared that they were unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or did not want to disclose their status, employees were then required to complete a COVID-19 Education Program and Rapid Antigen Testing three (3) times per week.

A formal 90 Day Review Period was also established as part of the Vaccination Policy which would provide for the Municipality of Kincardine to re-evaluate the policy for application and relevancy. Since the implementation of the Vaccination Policy, there have been updates provided by the Public Health Unit and the provincial government to the eligibility requirements and supply of Rapid Antigen Test which will impact the application of the policy.

Ontario currently has a limited supply of Rapid Antigen Tests which are being prioritized for health care and highest risk settings (i.e. hospitals, long-term care, retirement homes, congregate living settings, schools and childcare facilities). With the limited supply and change in criteria from the provincial government, it would no longer be reasonable or responsible for the Municipality of Kincardine to require employees to source and obtain Rapid Antigen Tests at the employee cost of \$20-\$40 per test, three times per week. It is also advised that Rapid Antigen Testing not be used for asymptomatic individuals and used only to confirm if a symptomatic individual is positive for COVID-19. The Municipality of Kincardine has a Daily Active Screening process in place for employees who need to declare if they are experiencing symptoms prior to attending work each day which will continue.

Given this information, the recommendation is to eliminate the regular Rapid Antigen Testing requirement for employees who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or care not to disclose their status. The Vaccination Policy and Procedure will still require employees to declare their Vaccination Status to assist with the application of isolation period guidelines established by Public Health, that will impact employees and workplace levels of service. Any employee who is not fully vaccinated or care not to disclose their status will be required to complete an Education Program that will include the following learning objectives:

- How COVID-19 vaccines work
- Vaccine safety related to the development of the COVID-19 vaccines
- Benefits of vaccination against COVID-19
- Risks of not being vaccinated against COVID-19
- Possible side effects of COVID-19 vaccination
- The Municipality of Kincardine

The purpose of requiring employees who are not fully vaccinated or care not to disclose to complete the Education Program is to provide them with the opportunity to be knowledgeable and make an informed decision on if they will get vaccinated.

The proposed changes to the policy and procedure do not change any of the currently implemented workplace control measures which include daily active screening, mandatory masking, physical distancing, hand hygiene and enhanced cleaning to protect our employees.

The implementation of the Vaccination Policy and Procedure was initially faced with a number of objections, questions, and concerns from employees, but we have seen good compliance since. The change in this policy and procedure will impact 22 employees who are currently completing regular Rapid Antigen Testing. The Vaccination Policy will continue to be a condition of employment for any new employees.

Corporate Strategic Plan 2020-2025: Not Applicable

Financial Implications: Not Applicable

Attachments:

1. GG 6.17 - COVID-19 Vaccination Policy
2. COVID-19 Vaccination Procedure
3. Media Release - Eligibility for PCR Testing & Contact and Case Management