



September 23rd CLBC COVID 19 Teleconference for Individuals and Families

Plain Language Summary of Questions and Answers

Who were the presenters answering questions on this call?

- Dr. Michael Prince, Board Chair, Community Living BC
- Dr. Daniele Behn Smith, Deputy Provincial Health Officer
- Ross Chilton, CEO, Community Living BC

Opening Remarks from Ross Chilton:

- We know this is a stressful time for everyone
- Some support staff are worried about getting the vaccine and this is worrisome for individuals and families
- Some individuals are worried about the vaccine too
- We are still further ahead than this time last year
- We have personal protective equipment and vaccines are available to everyone
- We will get through this together

Opening Remarks from Dr. Behn Smith:

- I know and understand this is a very difficult time
- We thought we would be in a different place by now
- We care very deeply about how the pandemic is affecting self advocates and families and we are considering you in all the decisions being made
- The Delta variant is hitting some people really hard
- We need even more people to be vaccinated than we thought
- We are getting there- over 86% of people have their first vaccine. That's really good.
- There is only a very small list of people who can't take the vaccine. For example, people who have life threatening allergic reactions to both types of vaccines being offered.
- We see very clearly that even people who have medical issues are safe to take the vaccine
- People who are fully vaccinated are way less likely to get COVID 19 and far less likely to end up in hospital, and very, very unlikely to die of COVID 19
- The risk of people being unvaccinated is serious
- The numbers we have in the ICU are high

- We can't afford to see the strain on the medical system go higher
- There is a vaccine Order in place for staff who work at long-term care homes because older people who live in these homes are still the people who are at the biggest risk of getting very sick or dying from COVID 19
- The Order is now being expanded to all health care workers because of the risk to our health care system
- The details of who is included in that order are still being worked on
- There is a lot of advocacy coming from community living to make an Order for support workers to be vaccinated
- Dr. Henry has to follow the Public Health Act when putting out an Order
- Right now, there isn't that same broad public risk for people with disabilities as there is for older people who live in long-term care
- The new Vaccine Card program is focussed on non-essential services like indoor places like restaurants, gyms- require people to be fully vaccinated. T
- The Vaccine Card program was created to protect people who use those services and to encourage people who still have questions about the vaccine to go and talk to someone they trust to go and make the decision.
- You don't need to show your vaccine status for things like fast food restaurants, grocery stores, libraries, take out...

Question - Do I need to get another shot if I'm already double vaccinated? What is the status of a booster shot based on housing arrangement and some residents having compromised immune systems. Do the residents have to apply individually or could we get a "group shot appointment" like last time?

Answer:

- We are following the guidance from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#) to tell us when a booster shot is needed for everyone
- A third dose is being offered to a very specific group of people who aren't able to get the same protection from COVID 19 only 2 vaccines. This is usually because they are having medical treatment of some kind
- If we see that our vaccine protection from COVID 19 is going down for everyone, then we will offer a booster
- It is clear that the current level of protection we have is working right now
- Yes, at some point we will need boost our immunity as a whole, but the exact timing is not yet known
- We hope that future vaccines will be accessible in the same way as they have been offered so far

Question - Throughout the pandemic, we have been concerned about having people in our home as my daughter has significant health challenges. Being able to use our respite funding flexibly has been key to giving us a break during this time. Will CLBC allow families to use respite funding flexibly after September 30th?

Answer:

- Yes, we have revised our respite policy so that families will have ongoing flexibility after September 30th to use their respite funding in ways that work for them.
- You can look at this new [CLBC Family Respite Policy here](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions here](#)

Question - We are having great difficulty finding caregivers that are available and vaccinated. We cannot fill all the hours that neighbours and family members have been hired to fill during COVID 19. Will CLBC extend the paid family care givers caveat until more vaccinated caregivers can be found. What is CLBC doing to help families who cannot find staff?

Answer:

- No, you won't be able to pay immediate family members (parents) after September 30th
- Some specific exceptions may still apply
- Recruitment and retention of staff is a challenge now and before the pandemic
- Families are being creative and can pay neighbours and non-immediate family members to provide respite
- [Vela Canada](#) and the [Family Support Institute](#) have worked together improve and re-launch [Support Worker Central](#) to help with this issue

Question - Why haven't you made vaccinations mandatory for support workers in our sector? Can an agency employer require support staff to be vaccinated if they are providing support, including personal care and assistance with feeding, to persons who would likely become severely ill if they got COVID 19? If not, can the COVID 19 safety measures, ie mask wearing, hand-washing hygiene (including not touching your phone while providing care!), be required to be followed in an attempt to minimize potential risk for a vulnerable individual?

Answer:

- The new Order for health care workers to be vaccinated is still being developed

- We expect that nurses who work in group homes and other settings will be mandated to get the vaccine, but someone who is not employed by the health authority may not be mandated to get the vaccine
- Who is included and not included in the Order has to do with that definition of broad level of public risk that Dr. Henry has to follow
- A reminder- there is a very short list of people who can NOT be vaccinated
- If someone can absolutely not be vaccinated then, yes, all the precautions need to be put into place to stop the spread of any virus
- There are individual situations and settings that need to be figured out. For example, some employers are requiring vaccination status (employees have to say whether or not they have been vaccinated) so they know what protection measures need to be put into place, like masks and distancing

Question - Can I require my support worker to be vaccinated?

Answer:

- Support workers are not part of the public health Order
- However, some employers are looking for legal advice on whether they can require their staff to be vaccinated

Question - My son's community-based community inclusion program used to go into all sorts of community recreation centres, classes, places to volunteer, etc. which stopped with COVID 19. He (and I) would like to begin doing these things again, but I am pretty sure there are staff in his program who are unvaccinated. If community inclusion is a requirement of the job, can it be a requirement that a support worker be vaccinated? Could I require this if I had Individualized Funding?

Answer:

- CLBC wants to work with agencies so that they can make as much as possible happen for the people we serve
- People who use Individualized Funding can require who you hire to be vaccinated
- We encourage you to talk with your service provider and work together to see what *can* happen within this situation we are all in
- Service providers are doing their best to protect individuals while still having enough staff to do the work
- Personal protection is the most important thing you can do.
- We have a very high vaccine coverage across the province

- You should have a high level of confidence in your protection if you and your loved one are vaccinated

Question - How do I get vaccination card if I don't have a computer or even a phone?

Answer:

- You do need a phone or to ask for help from someone who has a phone to get the vaccine card
- Call: [1-833-838-2323](tel:1-833-838-2323) and they will help you and mail you a copy of the code you need to show
- Remember you also need to provide another piece of picture ID

Question - What if I cannot get vaccinated? Will there be an exception card or something for me to show?

Answer:

- There is a very small number of people who can not get vaccinated
- I encourage you to go back to your doctor and talk through the risks
- For people who are truly not able to get vaccinated there will be form called a **medical exception form** that needs to be filled out with a medical professional and then submitted and reviewed before being given some kind of accommodation

Question - Is it safer to only hang out with people who are double vaccinated? If you can spread COVID 19 with or without being vaccinated why does it matter?

Answer:

- Yes, it is safer to be around people who are double vaccinated
- It is true that the virus can spread by people who are both vaccinated and not vaccinated
- You are way less likely to spread it to other people if you are double vaccinated
- If you have been double vaccinated, you will have less amount of the virus in you to spread to other people
- You are also way less likely to get COVID 19 if you have been vaccinated

Question - Can my daughter's community inclusion program participants begin to ride together in cars if everyone in the car is masked and vaccinated?

Answer:

- It sounds like this example is a low risk because being participants are double vaccinated and wearing masks
- [Work Safe BC](#) has great resources to help employers and programs know the safest way to offer their services, including all the ways to reduce the risk of spreading COVID 19

Question - Someone told me the variants are because COVID 19 is figuring out how to beat the vaccine. Is this true?

Answer:

- No. This Delta variant has not figured how to beat the vaccine
- But it could happen in the future if not enough people get vaccinated
- Every time COVID 19 spreads to someone else there is a chance for the virus to change
- We are watching closely to see if a variant could not respond to a vaccine
- Right now, the vaccines are working to protect people from the variants
- The way to stop new variants and to prevent a variant that is immune to our vaccines is to reduce the number of COVID 19 cases across the whole population
- We need to get close to the 90% of people vaccinated
- We have to work together across the world to stop COVID 19

Remember it is important for us to stay connected. The Family Support Institute (FSI) and Self Advocacy Groups are hosting events and activities to help us stay strong. You can check them out on the [FSI website](#) and [Calendar for Connection](#).

Feel free to submit questions at anytime to CLBCInfo@gov.bc.ca

**CLBC is committed to having another teleconference call
for individuals and families in the coming months.**

Visit the CLBC website for more information and updates [here](#)