

October 6, 2021

Attention: Health Care Providers

COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Exemption Program

Manitoba recommends that all eligible individuals who live, work or study in Manitoba be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. There are limited contraindications that preclude an individual from being vaccinated, or delay an individual from being (fully) vaccinated. Individuals with contraindications, or who experience delays in vaccination due to their medical history, may be exempt from current provincial public health orders that restrict attendance at certain public settings as set out in the current provincial public health orders to fully vaccinated persons.

The following circumstances are outside of the scope of the Manitoba COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Exemption Program:

- COVID-19 vaccine requirements for travel purposes.
- COVID-19 vaccine requirements for workplace purposes (e.g., unvaccinated individuals in certain sectors must adhere to regular COVID-19 testing).
- Other non-medical exemptions (e.g., religious exemptions).

Based on the guidance of Manitoba Health and Seniors Care, Shared Health, and the Clinical-Medical Advisory Committee, people may be eligible for temporary or permanent medical exemption from the public health orders that restrict access to certain public settings to fully vaccinated persons, as per the following exemption criteria:

- Diagnosis of myocarditis or pericarditis within seven days of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, **confirmed by a licensed cardiologist.**
- Diagnosis of Guillian-Barré syndrome (GBS) within 42 days of COVID-19 vaccination, **confirmed by a licensed neurologist.**
- A report of a serious adverse event following immunization (AEFI) after a dose of COVID-19 vaccine where the final recommendation documented in PHIMS is for no further COVID-19 vaccination, **confirmed by a licensed provincial Medical Officer of Health¹.**
- Acute diagnosis of Vaccine-Induced Immune Thrombotic Thrombocytopenia (VITT) **confirmed by a CancerCare Manitoba (CCMB) hematologist** represents an absolute

¹ If a clinician believes that a serious AEFI occurred following a dose of COVID-19 vaccine, they must complete an AEFI form and submit it to public health for review. On the AEFI form the clinician should indicate that a request for exemption has been made by the patient. If an AEFI has already been submitted for the same event, the clinician must submit a new AEFI form that clearly communicates this is an update to include the request for exemption.

contraindication to further vaccination with an adenovirus vector COVID-19 vaccine. Subsequent vaccination with an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine may be feasible but should be approved by a CCMB hematologist.

- CAR-T therapy within the last three months, **confirmed by CCMB hematologist/oncologist.**
- Allogenic or autologous stem cell transplant within the last three months, **confirmed by CCMB hematologist/oncologist.**
- Solid organ transplant recipients: pre-transplant within two weeks of transplant and post-transplant within the last month regardless of induction therapy, **confirmed by the licensed specialist supervising the transplant.**
- Active receipt of anti-cancer drug therapy may attenuate the immune response to vaccination however, given the significant risk of COVID-19 related severe complications and mortality in this patient population, the general approach has been to proceed with immunization. There may be clinical reasons in a subset of this population where deferring vaccination to a later date is appropriate, as per the **CCMB licensed oncologist/hematologist.**
- Active receipt of one or more of the following medications within the last six months may attenuate the immune response to vaccination: alemtuzumab, anti-thymocyte globulin (ATG)/thymoglobulin, basiliximab, blinatumomab, obinatuamb, ocrelizumab, ofatumumab, cyclophosphamide or rituximab. Given the significant risk of COVID-19 related severe complications and mortality in this patient population, the general approach has been to proceed with immunization. There may be clinical reasons in a subset of this population where deferring vaccination to a later date is appropriate, as per the **CCMB oncologist/hematologist or licensed specialist prescribing the therapy.**
- Severe allergy or anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of a COVID-19 vaccine or any of its components that cannot be mitigated, **confirmed by a licensed allergist at the Health Sciences Centre (HSC) Allergy Clinic.**

Details on the COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Exemption Program is located within the Clinical Practice Guidelines located at https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covidvaccine/clinical_practice_guidelines.pdf. The overall process consists of the following:

- 1) A client will connect with their primary care provider (or licensed specialist if a relationship is already in place with a specialist) and set up an appointment to review the COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Exemption Program eligibility criteria.
- 2) The primary care provider will review the client's medical history and the eligibility criteria with the client and, if applicable, will refer the client to the appropriate licensed specialist. **The provider will bill the appropriate visit tariff from the Physician's Manual using the K indicator in the special circumstances field.**
- 3) The specialist will meet with the client (may be virtual or in-person as required to complete the assessment) to conduct an assessment of the medical history and

review the client's file to determine eligibility. **The specialist will bill the appropriate visit tariff from the Physician's Manual using the K indicator in the special circumstances field.**

- 4) If the client meets the eligibility criteria, the specialist will submit an exemption to Manitoba Health and Seniors Care, and Shared Health.
- 5) Once the necessary documents are submitted to Manitoba Health and Seniors Care, and Shared Health by the specialist, the information is entered into the client's electronic public health record in PHIMS and made available in the digital QR Code. Clients would also be able to apply for a printed Vax Card as well.

It is anticipated a client should be able to access their digital QR code and request their Vax Card within 7-14 business days of the specialist submitting the documentation to Manitoba Health and Seniors Care, and Shared Health (timeline is subject to change). Information for the public on how to access a digital/print card is available online at: <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/vaccine/immunizationrecord/residents.html#immunization-cards>.

There will be no ability to view a medical exemption on eChart and only identified licensed specialists will have the ability to submit exemptions to Manitoba Health and Seniors Care, and Shared Health.

Please share this information with all relevant colleagues in your facility/clinic. If you have any questions, please email COVID@gov.mb.ca.

Sincerely,

"Original Signed By"

Dr. Brent Roussin, MD, JD, MPH, FRCPC
Manitoba Chief Provincial Public Health Officer

"Original Signed By"

Joss Reimer, MD FRCPC MPH
Medical Lead, Vaccine
Implementation Task Force