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Seniors' Care Coalition to Require Mandatory Vaccination for Long-Term Care and Retirement Home Staff

Mississauga, Ontario (August 26, 2021) – A coalition of national seniors' living operators, led by Chartwell, Extendicare, Responsive Group, Revera and Sienna, announced today that they are making COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for their long-term care and retirement home staff across Canada.

"The fourth wave of COVID-19 is here, with cases rising across the country. Variants of the virus, such as Delta and other evolving variants like Lambda, are highly transmissible and continue to pose significant risk to seniors, people with health issues and those who have not yet been fully vaccinated.

Together, Canada's largest seniors' care providers are doing everything we can to remain vigilant and protect the vulnerable populations in our care from the virus. Frontline staff at each organization have demonstrated an enthusiastic response to our voluntary vaccination programs. We thank them for their commitment, but we need to do more.

As of October 12, 2021, staff who are not fully vaccinated will be placed on an unpaid leave of absence. Full vaccination is also required for all new hires, students and agency personnel, across each organization. The new vaccination policy will enhance protection against the virus for the people we care for and team members who deliver that care, as well as essential caregivers and visiting family members.

Vaccinations are safe, highly effective and significantly reduce the risk of serious illness and hospitalization. Each operator has removed barriers to vaccination and continues to provide supports to their frontline staff including education, appointment booking and paid time for vaccination, resulting in already high staff vaccination rates that continue to rise each week. In light of this, we do not expect any impact on staffing levels. We are optimistic our staff will continue to act in the best interest of our communities and will work to achieve full vaccination across our homes.

As rates of infection once again increase in communities across the country, unvaccinated staff are more likely to bring the virus to work. The safety of our residents in long-term care and retirement homes, who trust us to provide the care and services they need, is paramount. This policy will increase their level of safety and improve quality of life for residents by reducing the need for isolation and disruption of daily activities that result from outbreak restrictions. It also protects ongoing access to visits from family members, which are critical to the well-being of all those in our care for whom outbreak restrictions have been difficult.

Throughout the pandemic, the dedication of our frontline staff has not wavered. We applaud frontline heroes across the country and, together, we call on all health care leaders to take up this challenge with their own teams, to support us in our work to build a fully vaccinated health-care workforce across Canada."

- Vlad Volodarski, CEO, Chartwell Retirement Residences
- Dr. Michael Guerriere, President and CEO, Extendicare
- Bill Dillane, President, Responsive Group Inc.

- Thomas Wellner, President and CEO, Revera Inc.
- Nitin Jain, President and CEO, Sienna Senior Living

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