



IAN ARTHUR

MEMBER OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT
KINGSTON AND THE ISLANDS

Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
5th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

September 22, 2021

Minister Elliott,

We write to you today at the behest of small businesses in our communities and across Ontario. As of today, Ontario will begin to require proof of vaccination in select indoor settings, and many outstanding questions – especially given the fact that a secure digital version of the vaccination certificate will not be available for at least another month.

Ontario's proof of vaccination program comes into effect too late, well into a fourth wave fuelled by the more contagious variant and made worse by the government's failure to act swiftly and invest in protecting schools, hospitals and congregate care settings. It relies instead on restaurants and bars, clubs and gyms to "keep Ontario open" and leaves too many loopholes to blunt the first wave. Despite this, businesses are keen to do their part to protect their patrons, their staff and the community, but they've been left with last-minute, often vague, guidance on how to implement the certificate program.

Here are some of the questions we've received from local businesses and Business Improvement Associations that we would like to put to you for answers:

- If vaccines are mandated for patrons why aren't they mandated for employees?
- How should staff respond when patrons refuse to comply?
- How will businesses and their patrons be protected from anti-vaccine demonstrators who have increasingly targeted them?
- What supports are available for businesses should who incur additional staffing costs in order to implement the certificate system?
- Who should businesses call in the event of conflicts over this program?
- What are the consequences for businesses that are deemed not in compliance with the program, given the lack of clarity and plethora of exemptions?
Once proof of vaccination is confirmed, is the patron considered approved indefinitely or must they be verified each visit?

The Ministry of Health's guidance, *Proof of Vaccination Guide for Businesses and Organizations under the Reopening Ontario Act*, dedicates half of its pages to exemptions, and offers little if any guidance or support to handling the tense interactions that this puts

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program will foreseeably find staff in, when they begin to enforce the Government's program. This will have the effect of forcing businesses to choose between enforcement and their livelihood, while adding to the burden of independent businesses.

We ask that in addition to providing these details, you heed the call of Official Opposition Leader Andrea Horwath and work to improve this certificate program without delay.

Sincerely,

Ian Arthur
MPP for Kingston and the Islands
Official Opposition Critic for
Small business recovery

Marit Stiles
MPP for Davenport

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