



## Office of the Regional Chair | Jim Bradley

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# Memorandum

CHR 5-2021

**TO:** Regional Council

**FROM:** Regional Chair, Jim Bradley

**DATE:** August 26, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Need for a Province-wide COVID-19 vaccine certificate

As we have all observed, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to drastically impact both the health and economy of Niagara. More recently, studies have shown that the Delta variant is as much as twice as contagious as the original strain of the virus, potentially bringing with it more severe illness (Katella, 2021).

Equally as important, studies have shown that unvaccinated individuals remain at the greatest risk of both becoming infected and spreading the virus. While it is still true that fully vaccinated people with the Delta variant can spread the virus to others, vaccinated people appear to be infectious for a shorter period (CDC, 2021). The CDC has also found that unvaccinated individuals are 2,900% more likely to become hospitalized after becoming infected by COVID-19 (Griffin, et al, 2021).

In short, the best-available science is pointing towards the critical importance of vaccinations in combating the pandemic and helping us return to our normal lives. Slowing the spread of the virus, and thereby reducing the chances of additional variants, is a crucial step in protecting the health of our residents and the sustainability of our economy.

In the recent days, we have seen a number of private businesses and public institutions across both Niagara and the province introduce policies that would require proof of vaccination in order for individuals to gain access to facilities and in-person services. These actions demonstrate the wide-spread support of vaccinations in our community and the important part that vaccines will play in helping us return to a sense of normalcy.

Just this morning, the president of the Association of Local Public Health Agencies (ALPHA) called on the province of Ontario to develop a province-wide vaccination certificate system. ALPHA President Dr. Paul Roumeliotis stated that a province-run system would provide an easy and convenient way for individuals to prove their vaccination status. ALPHA has stated that in the absence of a provincial solution, the association would implement their own system.

It is important to note that the Provinces of Quebec, British Columbia and Manitoba have already moved to create such systems in order to both support local businesses and encourage vaccination rates with residents. I believe that it is in Ontario's best interest to keep in pace with our neighbours across the country.

I believe that now is the time to act. All evidence shows that vaccines save lives, and they will play a crucial role in keeping our economy open.

Give the importance of vaccines in combating COVID-19, the increasing number of businesses and organizations who are requiring proof of vaccination status, the need to support our private sector, and the opinion of Ontario's Medical Officers of Health, I respectfully request that this council consider passing a motion that calls on the Province of Ontario to implement a proof-of-vaccination status certification program at the earliest possible opportunity.

Sincerely,

**Jim Bradley**  
Regional Chair

References:

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Griffin, J. B., Haddix, M., Danza, P., Fisher, R., Koo, T. H., Traub, E., Gounder, P., Jarashow, C., & Balter, S. (2021). SARS-CoV-2 infections and Hospitalizations among persons aged  $\geq 16$  years, by vaccination status — Los Angeles County, California, May 1–JULY 25, 2021. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 70(34). <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7034e5>

Katella, K. (2021, August 18). *5 things to know about the Delta Variant*. Yale Medicine. <https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/5-things-to-know-delta-variant-covid>.