

Province announces changes to proof-of-vaccination program

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The provincial government has announced changes to the proof of vaccination requirements with COVID-19 Omicron variant cases expected to rise in the coming weeks.

In a press release last Friday (Dec. 10), the government said they would be delaying the lifting of proof of vaccination requirement beyond Jan. 17.

“As we continue to learn more about the Omicron variant, we are taking additional measures to protect our progress as we head into the winter months,” said Christine Elliott, deputy premier and minister of health.

Effective Jan. 4, Ontario will be requiring the use of their enhanced vaccine certificate with QR Code and the Verify Ontario app in settings where proof of vaccination is required.

The government said the QR code can be used digitally or by printing a paper copy.

Effective Dec. 20, youth aged 12 to 17 years will be required to show proof of vaccination to participate in organized sports at recreational facilities.

Ontarians are also being “strongly advised” on the advice of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Kieran Moore, to limit their social gathering and the number of gatherings they attend over the holiday season.

“Ontario, like other jurisdictions around the world, is seeing concerning trends in public health and health care indicators, and additional measures are required to protect our progress for the long term,” said Moore.

The province is also launching a holiday testing blitz offering voluntary rapid antigen screening to asymptomatic individuals free of charge as part of its enhanced winter testing strategy.

According to the government two million rapid test will be provided to high-traffic settings such as malls, retail settings, holiday markets and transit hubs.

As of Dec. 13 individuals 50 and over are eligible to schedule their booster dose appointments. Booster dose eligibility is expected to be expanded to all Ontarians 18 years and older on Jan. 4 with appointments booked approximately six months after receiving the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.