

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**IPAC CANADA STATEMENT ON ARBITRATION DECISION REGARDING
VACCINATE OR MASK (VOM) POLICY**

Wednesday, September 30th (WINNIPEG) - Infection Prevention and Control Canada (IPAC Canada) has reviewed the recent Arbitrator decision on a *Vaccinate or Mask Policy* issued following grievances filed against the Sault Area Hospital and the Ontario Hospital Association by the Ontario Nurses Association. In this decision, the Arbitrator struck down a Vaccine or Mask Policy.

Annual influenza immunization continues to be unanimously supported as an important measure to prevent transmission of seasonal influenza. There is disagreement amongst experts about the risk of transmission from unvaccinated asymptomatic carriers. The fundamental debate remains around what are reasonable approaches to employ during the provision of clinical care that prevents transmission of influenza within Canadian healthcare facilities.

It is IPAC Canada's position that healthcare workers should voluntarily receive annual influenza vaccination to prevent transmission of influenza to themselves, their families and their patients/clients. The annual influenza vaccine is available to all healthcare providers and is publicly funded in all provinces and territories.

In addition to immunization and Routine Practices, IPAC Canada reinforces other important actions to avoid acquiring or transmitting influenza. These actions should be supported by organizations' leadership staff and include: high compliance with the moments of hand hygiene; avoiding the workplace when ill with any respiratory symptoms and; conducting point-of-care risk assessments to determine the need for additional precautions.

IPAC Canada encourages its members to evaluate the evidence in its totality to determine the best approaches for your setting and staff.

About IPAC Canada

IPAC Canada, formerly CHICA–Canada, is a national, multi-disciplinary, voluntary association of Infection Prevention and Control Professionals (ICPs) with 22 chapters across the country dedicated to the health of Canadians by promoting excellence in the practice of infection prevention and control. Visit IPAC Canada's website (www.ipac-canada.org) for infection prevention and control information.

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