

May 20, 2021

Prof. Alan Shepard
President, Western University
Office of the President
Stevenson Hall, Suite 2107
London, ON N6A 5B8

Dear President Shepard,

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support in the COVID-19 pandemic. The recent decline in cases, in addition to the increase in vaccine coverage, is encouraging and hopeful.

Vaccination against COVID-19 is the single most important intervention in reducing the transmission of COVID-19. Ensuring a high amount of vaccine coverage in all communities will be critical to ensuring an ongoing decline in cases and ending the pandemic. This will particularly important with the return of students to post-secondary institutions in our region in the fall of 2021.

Therefore, the Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) strongly supports all efforts to increase the uptake of COVID-19 vaccination, particularly in congregate living settings such as post-secondary residences. These interventions should include barrier-free access to vaccine and clear information to ensure confidence in the vaccine.

Mandating vaccine for residents of post-secondary residences would substantially increase vaccine uptake. As Medical Officer of Health, I urge you to consider making proof of vaccination against COVID-19 (or proof of medical exemption) mandatory for all residents of your residences. Ontario's *Immunization of School Pupils Act* and its associated regulations provide an example of a mandatory vaccine policy, as well an approach to providing rare, reasonable and appropriate exemptions. Vaccination rates for these mandatory vaccines in Ontario schools are all very high.

The MLHU is available to provide support to you in our collective efforts to increase vaccination in the Middlesex and London community. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Christopher Mackie, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health