



# HEALTH CARE ASSISTANT

Previously called the  
**RESIDENT CARE AIDE / HOME SUPPORT WORKER**  
Program

## Program Information

Thompson Career College  
774 Victoria Street, Kamloops, BC V2C 2B6  
Phone: (250) 372-8211 Fax: (250) 372-8212

Web site: [www.ThompsonCC.ca](http://www.ThompsonCC.ca) Email: [info@ThompsonCC.ca](mailto:info@ThompsonCC.ca)



Thompson Career College provides quality training for job opportunities in the health care industry.



Thompson Career College is accredited by P.C.T.I.A.  
(Private Career Training Institutions Agency of B.C.)

Programs are eligible for student financial aid  
under the designation agreement with Student Aid B.C.

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# **WELCOME LETTER**

Thank you for your inquiry regarding our **Health Care Assistant** program. This program gives you the certification required to work as a **Resident Care Aide, Home Support Worker** or **Community Health Worker**.

Care Aides are an important part of the health care team that supports the elderly, sick and disabled. There is a strong demand for qualified, certified Care Aides because of the increasing number of elders in our communities and because of an increased focus on providing care in a community setting. Our program teaches you to care for the whole person, including their health care, personal support and social needs, in an environment that respects all of the vibrant and rich cultures in Western Canada.

## ***SMALL classes, PERSONAL support, GREAT instructors***

The staff at Thompson Career College are committed to staying on top of the ongoing changes in health care. We have introduced training on updated Interior Health practices including Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention (MSIP), Infection Control and others. The college actively participated in a recent provincial initiative defining new standards for Health Care Assistant training curricula in BC. This participation allows us to immediately meet these new standards. In addition, all of our HCA teachers are still active as health care practitioners. The program includes supervised field training placements where you will gain real world experience in applying the knowledge and skills you learned in the classroom environment.

Thompson Career College is accredited with the Private Career Training Institutions Agency of British Columbia (PCTIA – [www.pctia.bc.ca](http://www.pctia.bc.ca)). You can apply for provincial and federal financial aid to assist you with the cost of taking the program ([www.studentaidbc.ca](http://www.studentaidbc.ca)).

Our students come from different cultural and educational backgrounds, and range in age from 19 to 55. For adult learners, and for all learners who like to be treated as adults, Thompson Career College is the place to be. The college provides a respectful and supportive learning environment. Classes are small, and attention is personalized. At Thompson Career College, we get to know each of our students personally and professionally. This is very different from attending a larger institution where it is harder to form personal connections with your instructors, administrators and fellow students.

This packet provides the following information and forms:

- an overview of the program, schedule and fees,
- an application form,
- a description of the courses that make up the program,
- information on how to apply for student financial aid, and
- forms to get a criminal record check, immunizations, and doctor's medical approval.

Seating space is limited, so we encourage you to complete the enclosed application and questionnaire and return them with your application fee of \$100.00 as soon as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions about the program, please call us at 877-840-0888 (locally 372-8211), email [Info@ThompsonCC.ca](mailto:Info@ThompsonCC.ca), or drop by to see us in person.

Geoff Collier, School Administrator  
[info@thompsoncc.ca](mailto:info@thompsoncc.ca)  
(877) 840-0888 (toll free)  
(250) 372-8211 (in Kamloops)

# **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Health Care Assistant Program trains you to work as a Resident Care Aide, Home Support Worker, or Community Health Worker. Graduates provide personal support services to clients and their families in residential and community care settings. You are trained to assist the clients with activities of daily living; personal care, mobility, hygiene, medications, restorative activities and home management. You are also trained to act as a front-line member of the health care team, through pro-active observation of your client's condition and active communication with family members, nurses and doctors.

The program includes field training where you will gain real world experience in applying the knowledge and skills you learned in the classroom environment.

## **Job Description**

Health Care Assistants are a **vital part of the health care team** providing long term care to the elderly and the disabled. Employers such as Interior Health require new employees to have a certificate from a recognized Health Care Assistant certificate program.

Health Care Assistants, working as part of a multidisciplinary team under the direction of an RN or LPN, provide the following services in a variety of settings:

- Assist clients with the activities of daily living
- Help deliver care and rehabilitation programs to individuals with disabilities and chronic medical conditions
- Provide for the comfort, safety and well-being of clients
- Observe and report on client health and living conditions
- Assist with recreational activities

## **Prospective Student Profile**

The attitude, abilities and approach of the Health Care Assistant are critical to client well-being and health. Prospective students must have the following characteristics:

- Sensitivity and respect for clients' individuality and different cultures
- A caring, compassionate nature
- Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing
- Ability to work as a member of a team
- Physical ability to carry out the duties of the position, this job is hard physical work
- Ability to organize work and manage time
- Energetic, hard working and self-motivated
- Dependable, particularly regarding getting to work regularly and on time

## Program Structure and Hours

This is an intensive 24 week program that requires students to attend 5 days a week. Students are trained in as short an elapsed time as possible, while meeting the standards required by industry bodies and potential employers. The program focuses on the knowledge and skills needed by Health Care Assistants, without any unnecessary program content. It includes extensive hands on training in Lab activities at our school and on site at care facilities.

There are 15½ weeks of Classroom and Lab instruction on site at Thompson Career College, followed by a 4½ weeks of instruction on site at a facility. The program ends with a 4 week precepted practicum and program wrap-up back on campus. The program also includes a 1 or 2 week break, so the full elapsed time is 25 or 26 weeks.

765 total program hours:

- 480 Classroom / Lab hours
- 150 Clinical Instruction hours
- 135 Precepted practicum hours

### October 2012 Program Calendar

(subject to change)

Oct 1 to Dec 21, 2012	Instruction & labs at TCC – (Mon to Fri, 8:30 to 3:00)
Dec 22 to Jan 6, 2013	Winter Break
Jan 7 to Jan 25	Instruction & labs at TCC – (Mon to Fri, 8:30 to 3:00)
Jan 28 to Feb 24	Instruction and Labs at a facility - (Mon to Fri, 7:00 to 3:00 OR 3:00 to 11:00)
Feb 25 to March 26	Practicum – variable schedule
March 27 to 29	Instruction and program wrap-up at TCC - 8:30 to 3:00

### April 2013 Program Calendar

(subject to change)

April 1 to June 21, 2013	Instruction and labs at TCC - (Mon to Fri, 8:30 to 3:00)
June 22 to July 1	Summer Break
July 2 to 19	Instruction and labs at TCC - (Mon to Fri, 8:30 to 3:00)
July 22 to August 18	Instruction and Labs at a facility - (Variable days, 7:00 to 3:00 OR 3:00 to 11:00)
Aug 19 to Sept 17	Practicum - variable schedule
Sept 18 to 20	Instruction and program wrap-up at TCC - 8:30 to 3:00

## Fees

Tuition:	\$8,150.00
Materials & Books:	\$700.00
Application Fee:	\$100.00
Record Archival:	\$15.00

*Fees are subject to change. Student is responsible for purchasing 'duty' shoes and for living and travel costs while attending school and while on practicum.*

# ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

## **To apply to the program, do the following:**

1. Have a phone or in-person interview with an instructor to discuss the program, the career, and the admission requirements. Preferably in person, but this interview can be conducted by phone if you do not live in the Kamloops area. If you decide not to proceed after that interview, there is no cost.
2. Submit a completed **Application Form** and **Questionnaire** –Forms are attached.
3. Pay the **\$100 Application Fee** by cheque or credit card. Don't fax or mail credit card information, call us with the number. This is a non-refundable fee.

To be admitted into the program, the following requirements must be satisfied:

- You must demonstrate a clear understanding of the responsibilities and daily activities of a Resident Care Aide. This is based partly on the Questionnaire that you send in with your application. We may also schedule a second **interview** to discuss your knowledge of the job, and prior exposure you have had through personal, work or volunteer experience. If you have little or no experience with long term care, we may require that you **volunteer** for a week or two at a long term care facility to gain that experience.
- **High School Graduation or Mature Student** – You have to be a high school graduate OR mature student status (19 Years of age or older and out of school for at least a year) in order to enroll in this program. Please submit a **transcript** (copy is fine, original not required).
- **Fluent in Written and Spoken English** - If English is not your first language, and you did not take all of your high school (grades 10 through 12) at an English Canadian high school, you will need to provide proof of English fluency through our Literacy test. If you are a mature student without Grade 12, you either need to have passed Grade 11 English OR you can demonstrate English fluency through our literacy test.
- **Two references** – We will need reference letters (or emails) from two people who verify your ability to successfully complete this program and to work as a Resident Care Aide. These references will typically be employers, co-workers, teachers, counselors, doctors, nurses, or care aides.
- The physical and mental ability to work as a care aide - A supporting **performance ability statement** must be completed and filed with Thompson Career College. A form is attached that you use for this purpose. Note that applicants must have acceptable levels strength and endurance, and be free of any major back, leg or arm problems. Severe latex allergies are a problem.
- No criminal record that will prevent you from working with the vulnerable elderly in a residential facility or home support situation. A **current criminal record check** must be completed and filed with Thompson Career College. A letter of introduction is attached that you can take to your local police agency, where you will sign a consent form and have the completed record check sent to Thompson Career College. With this letter, you may not be charged for the criminal record check.
- A recent test for Tuberculosis showing no exposure to infection and up to date immunizations. An **Immunization Form** is attached that you can use to record these tests and immunizations. Contact Public Health in your area to set up an appointment (250-851-7300 in Kamloops). All these shots and tests should be free of charge, except for the Hepatitis A, and that shot is optional. We have also attached information from BC Health about these immunizations for health care workers.

Once you are admitted, and prior to going out into long term care facilities (beginning in week 16 of the program), you need to provide us with a copy of a **WHMIS Certificate**, and a **Food Safe Level 1 Certificate**. It is preferable to complete these certificates before the program starts. Information about where to get these certificates is available on our web site.

## APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Thompson Career College is accredited by the Private Career Training Institutions Agency (PCTIA) of British Columbia. As such, students who attend our programs can apply for student financial aid (loans and grants) from the provincial and federal governments.

Information is provided below for BC student aid applicants. If you are from another province, please contact us and we will provide you with the application information for that province.

You can apply online for BC financial aid. Go to the StudentAid BC website: [www.studentaidbc.ca](http://www.studentaidbc.ca) and click on 'apply online'. When you fill in the program/school information, use the following data:

*(Note that Financial Aid applications for 2012 / 2013 cannot be submitted before June 2012)*

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To apply for aid for the **October 2012** start date, use the following information:

School: **Thompson Career College, Inc. – BC – CAN**

Date Classes Start: **2012 October 1**

Date Classes End: **2013 March 29**

What year of this program will you be in?: **1**

Student Number: **leave blank**

Program / Faculty: **Health Sciences**

Major / Department: **Health Care Assistant**

Course Load: **100%**

Program Type: **Certificate**

Between the Date Classes Start and End,  
will you be on paid Co-op work term?: **No**

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To apply for aid for the **April 2013** start date, use the following information:

School: **Thompson Career College, Inc. – BC – CAN**

Date Classes Start: **2013 April 1**

Date Classes End: **2013 September 20**

What year of this program will you be in?: **1**

Student Number: **leave blank**

Program / Faculty: **Health Sciences**

Major / Department: **Health Care Assistant**

Course Load: **100%**

Program Type: **Certificate**

Between the Date Classes Start and End,  
will you be on paid Co-op work term?: **No**

Please contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

# CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Program topics include:

- Role of the Care Aide / Home Support Worker
- Individuality and Interpersonal skills
- Communication and Cultural sensitivity
- First Aid Level 1 and CPR certification
- Safety and Infection Control
- Mobility Assistance and Equipment
- Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention (MSIP)
- Abuse - Causes, Indicators, Legal Issues
- Household Management
- Optimal Support and Care Planning
- Charting and interRAI
- Personal Hygiene
- Assisting the Family
- Cognitive Impairment & Mental Health
- Managing Ongoing Conditions
- Assisting with Medications
- Assisting a Person Who is Dying
- Hands on experience in facilities and community care
- Job search techniques and guidance

The program is organized into the following courses, following the HCA curriculum standards defined by the BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development:

## **Health and Healing: Concepts for Practice - 70 Hours**

This course provides students with the opportunity to develop a theoretical framework for practice. Students will be introduced to the philosophical values and theoretical understandings that provide a foundation for competent practice as a HCA. The course focuses on concepts of caring and person-centred care; basic human needs and human development; family, culture and diversity as they relate to health and healing. Students will also be introduced to a problem-solving model that will be critical to their practice.

## **Health Care Assistant: Introduction to Practice - 30 Hours**

This course provides an introduction to the role of the HCA within the British Columbia health care system. Students will be introduced to the healthcare team and the roles and functions of HCA within the team. Students will also have opportunities to develop self-reflective skills required for competent practice.

Students receive ongoing guidance and support on resume creation, interview techniques, and job search techniques. The program also includes presentations from employers in the Thompson Cariboo Shuswap health region.

## **Health 1: Interpersonal Communications - 50 Hours**

This course focuses on the development of self-awareness, increased understanding of others and development of effective interpersonal communication skills that can be used in a variety of caregiving contexts. Students will be encouraged to become more aware of the impact of their own communication choices and patterns. They will have opportunity to develop and use communication techniques that demonstrate personal awareness, respect and active listening skills.

## **Health 2: Lifestyle and Choices - 30 Hours**

This course introduces students to a holistic concept of health and the components of a health-enhancing lifestyle. Students will be invited to reflect on their own experience of health, recognizing challenges and resources that can impact lifestyle choices. Students will be introduced to a model that can be applied in other courses to understand the multi-faceted aspects of health and healing.

## **Healing 1: Caring for Individuals With Common Health Challenges - 115 Hours**

This course introduces students to the normal structure and function of the human body and normal bodily changes associated with aging. Students will explore common challenges to health and healing in relation to each body system. Students will also be encouraged to explore person-centred practice as it relates to the common challenges to health and, in particular, to end-of-life care.

## **Healing 2: Caring for Individuals With Cognitive or Mental Challenges - 60 Hours**

This course builds on content from other courses to assist students to explore concepts and caregiving approaches that will allow them to work effectively with individuals experiencing cognitive or mental challenges. Emphasis is on recognizing behaviours and identifying person-centred intervention strategies.

## **Healing 3: Personal Care and Assistance - 125 Hours**

This practical course offers students the opportunity to acquire personal care and assistance skills within the parameters of the HCA role. The course is comprised of class and supervised laboratory experiences which assist the student to integrate theory from other courses to develop care-giver skills that maintain and promote the comfort, safety and independence of individuals in community and facility contexts.

## **Practice Experience in Assisted Living, Multi-Level and Complex Care - 285 Hours**

Students apply knowledge and skills from all other courses in the program in multi-level, complex care, and assisted living settings. A portion of this clinical experience is devoted to working with individuals experiencing cognitive challenges. Graduates gain the expertise and confidence needed to work as an HCA within a continuing care facility, in the assisted living environment, or in home support roles.

# HEALTH CARE ASSISTANT PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION



## THOMPSON CAREER COLLEGE

774 Victoria St., Kamloops, B.C. V2C 2B6

Telephone: (250) 372-8211 Fax: (250) 372-8212 email: info@ThompsonCC.ca

<b>PERSONAL DATA</b> <i>(please print)</i>	Application for:	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>October 2012</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>April 2013</b>
_____	_____	_____	_____
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME OR INITIAL	
_____		_____	
STREET ADDRESS (INCLUDE APT. OR UNIT #)		CITY	
_____	_____	_____	
PROVINCE	POSTAL CODE	PHONE	
_____	_____	_____	
EMAIL ADDRESS		PHONE (OTHER)	
_____	_____		
BIRTHDATE	<input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE		

**ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS** *(Check the box if you meet the requirement. All requirements must be met in order to be admitted to the program.)*

**GRADE 12 GRADUATE**

**OR**

**MATURE STUDENT STATUS** – (Did not complete Grade 12, at least 19 years of age and out of school for one year. A literacy test is required if you did not complete grade 11 English.)

\_\_\_\_\_

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDED OR ATTENDING      PROVINCE/COUNTRY

\_\_\_\_\_

COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED OR ATTENDING AND LEVEL ACHIEVED

**TRANSCRIPTS ATTACHED?**     **YES**     **WILL FORWARD SEPARATELY**

\* A transcript is preferred for each school, college or university you have attended

**FLUENT IN WRITTEN AND SPOKEN ENGLISH** - If English is not your first language or you did not complete Grade 11 English at a Canadian school, you will need to provide proof of English fluency or pass our literacy test.

**TB TEST** – A recent test for Tuberculosis (usually the Mantoux test) showing no exposure to infection. If you have not had a recent TB test, you can deal with this during the admission process, but this requirement has to be met before you can be formally accepted into the program.



## HEALTH CARE ASSISTANT STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATION (Grade level completed): \_\_\_\_\_ YEAR COMPLETED: \_\_\_\_\_

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**1. What are the main duties and responsibilities of a Health Care Assistant / Resident Care Aide?**

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**2. What personal strengths (characteristics) does a successful Health Care Assistant / Resident Care Aide possess? (List as many as you can)**

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**3. What strengths do you have which make you think that you would be a good Health Care Assistant?**

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**4. Why did you choose the Health Care Assistant program?**

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Local Detachment RCMP

Attention: Front Counter

This letter will introduce \_\_\_\_\_ who will be a student in the Health Care Assistant program at Thompson Career College. This individual will be working with the vulnerable sector and in this regard will require a criminal record check as outlined below:

√	No. 1	Records of criminal convictions found in the identification Data Bank attainable through the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) for which a pardon has not been granted.
√	No. 2	Records of criminal convictions attainable through CPIC for which a pardon has not been granted plus records of outstanding criminal charges which the RCMP are aware of or indicated within the Investigative Data Bank of CPIC.
√	No. 3	Records of criminal convictions and summary of police information (including records of outstanding criminal charges which the RCMP are aware of or indicated within the Investigative Data Bank of CPIC) attainable through CPIC for which a pardon has not been granted plus records of discharges which have not been removed from the Identification Data Bank in accordance with the Criminal Records Act. This will include all charges regardless of disposition.
√	No. 4	Police information located on computer systems (e.g. Police Information Retrieval System [PIRS], CPIC) and information located through local police indices checks. This will include all information related to non-convictions and all charges regardless of disposition.
√	Vulnerable Sector	Will allow police to conduct inquiries to determine if the applicant has been pardoned for a sexual offence.

Note that the **Vulnerable Sector check is required** for admission to this program.

Once the criminal record check is complete, please fax it to: (250) 372-8212, and also mail a copy to: Thompson Career College, 774 Victoria Street, Kamloops, BC V2C 2B6.

Yours truly,

Kathy Collier  
 Student Services  
 Thompson Career College  
[Information@ThompsonCC.ca](mailto:Information@ThompsonCC.ca)  
 (250) 372-8211 – office (250) 372-8212 - fax  
 (Kamloops Educational Institution)

**Health Care Assistant Preadmission - Performance Ability Statement**

As a Health Care Assistant / Care Aide you must have the ability to perform certain activities. Read each requirement carefully, and if you can perform the required functions then check the "I CAN PERFORM these functions" box. As you carefully consider these questions, remember that these requirements apply to the time that you are studying, as well as to your ability to work in the future as a pharmacy technician. **If you cannot perform these functions then we cannot admit you to the program because you will not be able to perform the functions required of a Health Care Assistant.**

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You must have the ability work on your feet for up to 8 or more hours per day. You must be able to walk rapidly for both short and long distances, and navigate up and down stairs, while safely carrying items in your arms.

I CAN PERFORM these functions

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You must be able to help clients move around, reposition people, make beds, lift items, do cleaning, and a myriad of other physical activities. Problems such as chronic fatigue, stamina issues, back, shoulder, arm or leg injuries, or other physical issues may make it impossible for you to work as a care aide,

I CAN PERFORM these functions

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Health Care Assistants care for vulnerable people with significant health and mental challenges, and the job includes caring for people at the end of their lives. The death of clients is something that all care aides must deal with. Care aides must therefore be mentally and emotionally stable. Any diagnosed mental or emotional disorders must be revealed to the college on this form in the comments section.

I CAN PERFORM these functions

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You must be able to see well enough to read handwriting and small print on charts, labels and computer screens. You must have the ability to listen and hear well enough to understand the spoken words of co-workers and clients. You must be able to type and write words, terminology and numbers. You must be able to speak clearly enough so you can be easily understood by others.

I CAN PERFORM these functions

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You must be able to concentrate, to meet schedules, and to consistently apply critical thinking skills. Conditions such as attention disorders, drug or alcohol dependencies, learning or attention disabilities, or other issues may make it difficult to succeed in this program or as a Health Care Assistant.

I CAN PERFORM these functions

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Health Care Assistants work in an environment that includes various cleaning and medical substances and equipment. Severe allergies may make it impossible to work in this environment. Minor allergies can usually be accommodated.

I CAN PERFORM these functions

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**Comments: If you can perform all these functions but may face some challenges in these areas, use the area below to describe these challenges (use another page if more space is needed)**

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By my signature I attest and affirm that the above information is complete and accurate and that I can perform all the functions described above.

Full Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



THOMPSON CAREER COLLEGE
774 VICTORIA STREET, KAMLOOPS, BC V2C 2B6
Phone: (250) 372-8211 Fax: (250) 372-8212

Contact Public Health in your area – (250) 851-7300 in Kamloops

STUDENT IMMUNIZATION RECORD

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTHDATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MEDICAL NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ COLLEGE PROGRAM: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATES OF IMMUNIZATION

Tetanus / Diphtheria: \_\_\_\_\_ Basic series with a booster if more than 10 years since previous dose.

Polio: \_\_\_\_\_ Basic series plus 1 adult booster dose

Chicken Pox: #1 \_\_\_\_\_ Vaccine not required if had disease.
#2 \_\_\_\_\_

Hepatitis B: #1 \_\_\_\_\_ If unsure of dates, serology recommended.
#2 \_\_\_\_\_
#3 \_\_\_\_\_

MMR: #1 \_\_\_\_\_ MMR ( Red Measles – Mumps – Rubella):
#2 \_\_\_\_\_ born < 1957 vaccine usually not required
born > 1957 2 doses recommended for
healthcare/childcare students

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Tuberculin testing required prior to entry into program.

Date of Test: \_\_\_\_\_ Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_
(If positive, a chest X-ray will be required – Public Health and/or your doctor will arrange)

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This is to certify that the above-named has been vaccinated as requested above.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## Immunizations for Health Care Providers in BC

### Why is immunization important for health care providers?

Health care providers are at risk of exposure to communicable diseases in the workplace.

Many diseases can be prevented with vaccination. Getting vaccinated helps protect your health and prevents disease transmission between you and your patients, and between you and your family and friends.

### What routine immunizations are recommended in BC?

The vaccines recommended are diphtheria and tetanus, polio, hepatitis B, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), varicella, and influenza. Diphtheria and tetanus, polio, MMR, varicella, and influenza vaccines are publicly funded for health care providers.

Immunization of employees is the responsibility of the Occupational Health department or assigned staff in the workplace. The employer and employee should keep all records of laboratory test results and any immunizations given.

### Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Polio

Immunization against diphtheria and tetanus is recommended for all adults in Canada. Booster doses with tetanus/diphtheria (Td) are recommended every 10 years, or sooner in the event of a bite or wound other than a clean, minor wound.

Immunization with inactivated poliomyelitis vaccine (IPV) is recommended for all health care workers who may be exposed to poliovirus and have not been immunized.

Booster doses are not required for health care providers in Canada.

Diphtheria is a serious communicable disease, causing death in five to 10 per cent of cases, with the highest rates among the very young and the elderly.

Tetanus is an acute and often fatal disease. While rare in Canada, cases have been reported that are associated with contaminated injection drug use, animal bites and wounds.

### Measles, Mumps, Rubella

**Measles:** To be considered protected against measles, health care providers born after 1956 should have proof of two measles vaccinations, documentation of physician-diagnosed measles, or a lab test result indicating immunity. Those born before 1957 have probably had measles disease and are therefore considered immune.

Measles is a highly contagious disease that can be more severe in infants, children and adults who have weakened immune systems.

**Mumps:** Individuals are considered protected against mumps infection if they were born before 1970, have proof of one dose of mumps vaccine, lab test result indicating immunity, or laboratory-confirmed mumps disease in the past. Mumps is generally a mild disease; however, complications such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) are more common in adults.

**Rubella:** Individuals are considered protected against rubella infection if they have proof of one dose of rubella vaccine, or a lab test result indicating immunity.

Rubella infection in adults may cause swelling and pain in the joints. Infections in the first three months of pregnancy have an 85 per cent risk of causing severe damage to a developing baby. Rubella outbreaks in health care facilities are of particular concern due to the potential spread to pregnant health care providers and patients.

Two doses of MMR vaccine are provided free to health care workers.

### Hepatitis B Virus Infection

Hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for health care providers who may be exposed to blood or body fluids through needle stick or other similar injuries, bites, or non-intact skin. All health care providers who experience a potential exposure to hepatitis B virus should consult their Occupational Health department for screening and testing, and measures to prevent the spread of disease.

Individuals are considered immune if they have completed a series of hepatitis B vaccine, and have a lab test result indicating immunity. Persons who do not develop immunity (non-responders) to an initial vaccine series should be offered a second series of vaccine. To check for immunity, testing for antibodies should be done one to six months after completion of the vaccine series.

### Varicella

Varicella vaccine is provided to health care providers who do not have protection against chickenpox disease. Evidence of protection against varicella infection includes a self-reported history or physician-diagnosed varicella disease or herpes zoster (shingles), a lab test result indicating immunity, or documentation of two doses of vaccine.

Varicella (chickenpox) infection tends to be more severe in adults. Two doses of vaccine given one month apart are required.

### Influenza

Annual influenza vaccine is provided to health care providers. All health care providers are at risk of getting and passing on the influenza virus to their families, friends, and patients. It is important to prevent disease transmission to persons at high risk of influenza-related complications, such as those with cardiac or pulmonary disorders, weakened-immune systems, other chronic medical conditions, and the elderly.

Influenza vaccination of health care providers has been shown to help reduce the illness and death of patients under their care in long-term settings and to reduce worker illness during the influenza season.

**For more BC HealthFile topics visit [www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm), or visit your local public health unit.**

**Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a registered nurse, available 24-hours every day:**

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

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