

## Open Letter Response

Dear Minister Copping,

Further to your statement issued September 29, 2021 in response to the Open Letter written by Healthcare Professionals United to Alberta Health Services, we wish to address a few points. We acknowledge that you took the time to read and respond to our letter. Alberta Health Services has not replied to date. We believe that open dialogue is essential for a healthy democracy.

First and foremost, we must reiterate that the purpose of our letter was specifically against MANDATED vaccinations which was explicitly stated in the second paragraph of our letter. We must be very clear, we are not “anti-vaxxers” as many choose to claim or assume. As stated in our letter, we are a group consisting of vaccinated and unvaccinated health care workers and we are pro-choice for medical treatments after fully informed consent and pro-evidence-based medicine. The arguments we presented in our Open Letter are not specifically arguing against vaccines, but are used as justification for our resistance to mandatory vaccinations imposed by Alberta Health Services for those of us who are unvaccinated and want to continue to serve the public as we have done during the last 19 months.

In this follow-up letter, we address some of the misconceptions and erroneous allegations you claimed against our Open Letter. We will specifically address your statement: *“The letter says COVID-19 vaccines have not been proven to prevent transmission of the virus. That’s patently misleading.”* To support this, you reference a pre-print study performed in Italy. You continue with *“recent data from the United Kingdom shows that two doses of vaccine are estimated to give 79 percent protection against symptomatic COVID and 96 percent protection against hospitalization. This includes the Delta variant.”* with a link to a newspaper article from *The Conversation*.

The common narrative is that vaccinated people do not transmit the virus and therefore it is believed that transmission is not possible. However, there is ample scientific literature to demonstrate that vaccinated people can become infected with and carry SARS-CoV-2 at high viral loads and thus transmit the disease. Some of this literature is presented below.

Specific to SARS-CoV-2 transmission, we direct you to the CDC’s Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (*MMWR*) of Aug 6, 2021 and the study titled “Outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 Infections, Including COVID-19 Vaccine Breakthrough Infections, Associated with Large Public Gatherings — Barnstable County, Massachusetts, July 2021” which is relevant to the Delta variant. This publication states, “Among the 469 cases in Massachusetts residents, 346 (74%) occurred in persons who were fully vaccinated” and “Real-time RT-PCR Ct values in specimens from 127 fully vaccinated patients (median = 22.77) were similar to those among 84 patients who were unvaccinated, not fully vaccinated, or whose vaccination status was unknown (median = 21.54)” (1). High viral loads are considered to be positively correlated with high risk of viral transmission.

In this recent publication from Israel, an outbreak is described in a population 96% vaccinated, initiated by a fully vaccinated hemodialysis patient and subsequently transmitted between fully vaccinated health care workers and patients. The authors concluded, “This nosocomial outbreak exemplifies the high transmissibility of the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant among twice vaccinated and masked individuals.” (2). Of course, this was known on July 29, 2021 when a study out of Finland was reported. Those authors concluded, “this outbreak demonstrated that, despite full vaccination and universal masking of HCW,

breakthrough infections by the Delta variant via symptomatic and asymptomatic HCW occurred, causing nosocomial infections.” (3).

A recent article published in European Journal of Epidemiology showed no correlation of high vaccination rates resulting in lower case counts. Indeed, they state, “In fact, the trend line suggests a marginally positive association such that countries with higher percentage of population fully vaccinated have higher COVID-19 cases per 1 million people.” Also, “The lack of a meaningful association between percentage population fully vaccinated and new COVID-19 cases is further exemplified, for instance, by comparison of Iceland and Portugal. Both countries have over 75% of their population fully vaccinated and have more COVID-19 cases per 1 million people than countries such as Vietnam and South Africa that have around 10% of their population fully vaccinated.” (4)

Although we prefer to use peer reviewed publications, given that the Delta variant became dominant in only the past few months, we will present a number of pre-print papers that support our statement. The science is evolving and it is essential to keep pace with the rapid changes.

- In this Lancet pre-print, Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 Delta Variant Among Vaccinated Healthcare Workers, Vietnam, it is decisively stated, “Our study provided strong evidence demonstrating for the first time the transmission between vaccine breakthrough cases infected with the Delta variant.” (5)
- The recent pre-print article No Significant Difference in Viral Load Between Vaccinated and Unvaccinated, Asymptomatic and Symptomatic Groups Infected with SARS-CoV-2 Delta Variant states, “In our study, mean viral loads as measured by Ct-value were similar for large numbers of asymptomatic and symptomatic individuals infected with SARS-Cov-2 during the Delta surge, regardless of vaccine status, age, or gender.” (6)
- The pre-print for Shedding of Infectious SARS-CoV-2 Despite Vaccination states, “Combined with other studies, these data indicate that vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals infected with the Delta variant might transmit infection. Importantly, we show that infectious SARS-CoV-2 is frequently found even in vaccinated persons when specimen Ct values are low.” (7)

These articles are consistent with what the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said: "our vaccines are working exceptionally well," Walensky told CNN's Wolf Blitzer. "They continue to work well for Delta, with regard to severe illness and death -- they prevent it. **But what they can't do anymore is prevent transmission**" (emphasis added). (8)

This is a sampling of the scientific data that has guided our determination that MANDATORY VACCINATION of healthcare workers, or the population in general, is NOT a valid approach to dealing with the current pandemic. It is clear from the literature that asymptomatic as well as symptomatic vaccinated people can carry high viral loads and therefore transmit the disease as can unvaccinated people. It should be noted unvaccinated people are more likely to know that they are viral carriers as they are more likely to have symptoms. Since vaccinated and unvaccinated healthcare workers alike can carry and transmit SARS-CoV-2, we propose other appropriate mitigation strategies be instituted that do not discriminate against unvaccinated health care workers. We acknowledge the current pandemic and aim to work together to find solutions that do not compromise our medical ethics and infringe on our rights to choose what is administered into our bodies. Informed consent of all risks and benefits is the bedrock of modern medicine and should be provided to anyone considering vaccination and their

decision should not be influenced by coercion such as job loss for declining the vaccination. We are very interested in discussing the available science at your convenience and look forward to your response.

## References

- (1) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) Weekly/August 6, 2021/70(31); 1059-1062. (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7031e2.htm>)
- (2) Nosocomial outbreak caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant in a highly vaccinated population, Israel, July 2021. (<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.39.2100822>)
- (3) An outbreak caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant (B.1.617.2) in a secondary care hospital in Finland, May 2021. (<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2021.26.30.2100636>)
- (4) Increases in COVID-19 are unrelated to levels of vaccination across 68 countries and 2947 counties in the United States ( <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10654-021-00808-7>)
- (5) Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 Delta Variant Among Vaccinated Healthcare Workers, Vietnam ([https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3897733](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3897733))
- (6) No Significant Difference in Viral Load Between Vaccinated and Unvaccinated, Asymptomatic and Symptomatic Groups Infected with SARS-CoV-2 Delta Variant (<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.09.28.21264262v1>)
- (7) Shedding of Infectious SARS-CoV-2 Despite Vaccination (<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2021.07.31.21261387v4>)
- (8) Fully vaccinated people who get a Covid-19 breakthrough infection can transmit the virus, CDC chief says. (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/05/health/us-coronavirus-thursday/index.html> - accessed Oct 3, 2021)