

## **Update September 17, 2021: Alberta's Restriction Exemption Program**

Physiotherapy Alberta has received many calls regarding to the question of how the Government of Alberta's Restriction Exemption Program applies to physiotherapy practice.

Physiotherapy Alberta wishes to advise all physiotherapists that the Restriction Exemption Program only applies to discretionary services and businesses. Health-care services, including physiotherapy, are not included in the category of discretionary services.

Furthermore, the Code of Ethical Conduct includes the expectation that physiotherapists

Act in a respectful manner and do not refuse care or treatment to any client on the prohibited grounds of discrimination as specified in the *Canadian Human Rights Act*\* as well as on the grounds of social or health status.

Vaccine/immunization status is categorized as a health status; therefore, it is inconsistent with the expectations outlined in the Code of Ethical Conduct for physiotherapists to limit access to their practice locations on the basis of an individual's vaccine/immunization status.

Physiotherapy Alberta has received confirmation from Alberta Health that the rules in place for health professionals did not change in response to the Government of Alberta's September 15, 2021, announcements. As such, the rules that apply to physiotherapist practice are unchanged from the start of summer, and substantively unchanged since May 2020. Physiotherapists are expected to adhere to the guidance provided by Physiotherapy Alberta regarding practice during a pandemic.

Physiotherapy Alberta is reminding all physiotherapists that the many public health measures currently in use in health-care settings - cleaning/disinfecting of surfaces, use of masks, physical distancing, screening of patients when booking appointments and on patient arrival, point of care risk assessment, etc., all provide protection and mitigate against the spread of COVID-19 within the practice setting.

We continue to strongly encourage physiotherapists to be vaccinated.

Physiotherapy Alberta recognizes that the Restriction Exemption Program may create challenges for physiotherapy businesses that operate within public spaces and other facilities if those facilities choose to participate in the Restriction Exemption Program. Physiotherapists and physiotherapy business owners will need to work with facility operators to address site access issues for their patients.