



# Unvaccinated caregivers remain welcome at care homes

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MANITOBANS now need to be fully immunized against COVID-19 to go to a movie, eat at a restaurant or attend a museum — but the unvaccinated can still visit a vulnerable senior.

Those deemed a designated visitor — one of two who can be chosen by the senior themselves — can call on a resident of a personal or long-term care home without proof of vaccination.

The policy has been in place since the end of the second wave of the pandemic, said Jan Legeros, executive director of the Long Term & Continuing Care Association of Manitoba, just as vaccines were coming out.

However, families are now asking for it to be changed.

“We still had staffing challenges,” Legeros said Thursday. “And the residents missed their families and the tender loving care only a family member can provide.

“I think the vast majority of designated caregivers are double-vaxxed, and I’m sure they are just as concerned as everyone else. They’ve asked for designated caregivers to be part of the double-vaxxed,” she said. “The families have said they’re really happy the staff are being mandated for double vaccination and they think families should follow the same rules. Families believe families would be more than happy to comply.

“If not, then the same testing would apply to them as to staff who aren’t vaccinated.”

It’s not the first visitation policy put in place during the pandemic that has people scratching their heads.

Last month, two families told the *Free Press* they couldn’t visit relatives in hospital because, even though both they and the patients were fully vaccinated, there was another patient in the room who was unvaccinated. There were also no other rooms available for not only that patient, but also for a visit to take place elsewhere.

In one of his last acts as premier, Brian Pallister said Aug. 24 provincial employees, and those who work at provincially-funded agencies, who work with vulnerable populations will have to be fully immunized by Oct. 31.

Pallister and chief provincial public health officer Dr. Brent Roussin said those who don’t get the vaccine will have to undergo regular testing,