



September 27, 2021

Dear Premier Kenney, Minister Copping and Dr. Hinshaw,

As President and Alberta Board Representative for the Canadian Paediatric Society, we are writing to express our significant concern over the COVID-19 crisis in Alberta and to urge immediate action to reduce the suffering of children, youth, and families across the province.

While we strongly support the re-introduction of essential public health measures on September 16<sup>th</sup>, they do not go far enough to reflect how fast the virus is spreading or how overwhelmed our healthcare system currently is. In this fourth wave, which many have called the “pandemic of the unvaccinated” we must do everything possible to protect the health, safety and well-being of those under the age of 12 who are still ineligible for vaccination. New daily COVID-19 cases identified amongst those 0-11 years of age are [more than ten times what they were at the beginning of August](#), and there are now [more active cases being reported in those aged 19 and under than in those over the age of 50](#).

Not only are we extremely worried about the direct health impacts of Alberta’s COVID-19 crisis on children and youth, we are anxious about the threat posed to their access to education, community supports and essential services. Children and youth suffered immeasurably from school closures and social isolation in 2020. We must do everything possible to ensure they can benefit from in-person learning, peer connections and social and extracurricular activities this year. As such, we advise mandatory immunization for all adults working in schools or child care settings (or mandatory regular testing for those who cannot be vaccinated). Given the high community transmission at present, we advise expanding the indoor masking requirements in schools and child care settings to include all those over the age of two, including when seated at a desk or table (with limited exceptions including for eating/drinking, health conditions, or if they are unable to remove the mask without assistance). We support the resumption of mandatory isolation requirements for any household contact who is not fully immunized and for those who have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive. We advise mandatory testing, reporting and contact tracing of all COVID-19 cases in schools and child care settings. And we recommend that preparations begin now for in-school vaccination clinics for the seasonal flu and COVID-19, in anticipation of a Health Canada approved COVID-19 vaccine for those aged 5-11 years of age in the coming months.

Given the high transmissibility of the delta variant and the rise of active cases throughout the province, we are witnessing a significant increase in cases amongst children and youth. As adults, we must do everything in our power to protect the health and well-being of Alberta’s children and youth – especially given their continued ineligibility for vaccination. We therefore urge you to implement the above recommendations immediately to reduce the threat this crisis poses to Alberta’s youth.

Sincerely,

Ruth Grimes, MD  
President

Raphael Sharon, MD  
Board Representative for Alberta