Human Resources Legislative Update

Ontario Introduces Enhanced COVID-19 Vaccine Certificate and Verify Ontario App

Date: October 15, 2021

On October 15, 2021, the Ontario government announced that the enhanced COVID-19 vaccine certificate with the official QR (Quick Response) code, as well as the verification app, Verify Ontario, are available for download. These tools are intended to make the process of providing proof of vaccination in order to access certain public settings more secure and convenient for patrons, businesses and organizations.

As we reported in our *FTR Now*, Further Details Released on Ontario's Requirement for Proof of Vaccination in Select Settings, proof of vaccination requirements apply to select businesses and organizations, and took effect September 22, 2021. While the current vaccine receipt without QR code remains valid and will continue to be accepted, individuals who wish to download the enhanced vaccine certificate can do so through the COVID-19 vaccination portal over three days based on their birth month: October 15 (those born between January and April), October 16 (those born between May and August) and October 17 (those born between September and December). Starting October 18 at 6:00 a.m., the portal will be open to all individuals, regardless of their birth month. The requirement to provide a piece of identification that includes an individual's name and date of birth continues to apply.

Businesses and organizations can now download the free Verify Ontario app from the Apple App and Google Play stores. The Verify Ontario app will scan and read the official, government issued enhanced vaccine certificate with QR code. The app will also be able to scan and read SMART Health Codes from other provinces including Quebec and British Columbia.

Finally, O. Reg. 710/21, filed and in effect on October 15, amends O.Reg. 364/20, the Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step. O. Reg 710/21 adds an exemption to the proof of vaccination requirement to include individuals who are currently participating in a COVID-19 vaccine clinical trial that is authorized by Health Canada and is specified in the updated "Proof of Vaccination Guidance for Businesses and Organizations under the *Reopening Ontario Act*." It also permits businesses and organizations to use an electronic application for the sole purpose of confirming that patrons are fully vaccinated or are entitled to an exemption, in accordance with this guidance document.