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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ATU Canada Statement on Vaccination Mandates

TORONTO – There is no doubt that COVID-19 continues to be a major threat as it evolves into new variant strains – but science has responded with a vaccine that has the potential to minimize global spread and hospitalization. The virus has impacted many Canadians in different ways, from mild to severe illness and death. It has also damaged our health system, schools, livelihoods and community life.

ATU Canada is committed to fighting the virus and protecting the health and safety of our members and the public. As transit workers and riders, we have a collective responsibility to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

We know that COVID-19 vaccines work. Depending on occupation and pre-existing health status, numerous recent studies found that recipients of two-doses of vaccines have 85%-95% effective protection against COVID-19 variants as published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Trade unionists have a moral obligation and social responsibility to protect the collective interests of its members, keep workplaces safe, and to have each other's backs.

We support public health measures to increase vaccination rates as an essential means of protecting Canadians' health and safety and defeating the COVID-19 pandemic. This must be accomplished in a fair, reasonable, transparent, equitable fashion with full consultation and negotiation with unions.

ATU Canada is concerned that many of our employers may develop vaccination policies that are needlessly heavy-handed and self-defeating or use higher vaccination rates as an excuse to roll back health and safety measures which are still necessary to protect our members and the public. As always, ATU Canada will continue to support its members on issues relating to COVID-19, including vaccination mandates, on a case by case basis.

We believe that any decision around vaccination mandates must be made based on the expert advice of public health officials and scientific evidence, not employers or otherwise. ATU Canada expects to be invited to consult, participate and collaborate on any and all policies that affect the health and workplace safety of our members, and we remind transit agencies to respect our rights pursuant to reasonable accommodation.

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