

**American Hospital Association Policy Statement on
Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination of Health Care Personnel
Approved by the Board of Trustees
July 21, 2021**

America's hospitals and health systems are committed to protecting the health and well-being of health care personnel and the patients and communities that they serve. The best available scientific evidence indicates that:

- COVID-19 vaccinations are safe.
- COVID-19 vaccinations are effective at reducing both the risk of becoming infected and spreading the infection to others.
- COVID-19 has a significant risk of transmission both before the onset of symptoms and in the absence of symptoms. These risks are substantially higher among unvaccinated individuals.
- Among unvaccinated individuals, COVID-19 infections pose a substantial risk of severe illness and death and may lead to long-term adverse impacts to health. These risks are higher among those individuals with certain underlying health conditions, like many patients in hospitals or who are seen in hospital-based ambulatory settings.

To protect all patients, communities and personnel from the known and substantial risks of COVID-19, the American Hospital Association (AHA) strongly urges the vaccination of all health care personnel. COVID-19 vaccines protect health care personnel when working both in health care facilities and in the community. They provide strong protection against workers unintentionally carrying the disease to work and spreading it to patients and peers.

The AHA also supports hospitals and health systems that adopt mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies for health care personnel, with local factors and circumstances shaping whether and how these policies are implemented. The AHA encourages hospitals and health systems implementing mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies to:

- Provide exemptions for medical reasons and accommodations consistent with Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission guidelines (e.g., a sincerely held religious belief, practice or observance);
- Follow relevant Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) infection control guidelines, Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements, and other federal and state regulations regarding use of personal protective equipment and other infection control practices for unvaccinated staff receiving an exemption or accommodation. For example, unvaccinated personnel may be required to wear a mask at all times even if CDC guidelines and OSHA requirements were to relax mask requirements for vaccinated personnel;
- Ensure the policy is implemented in a manner consistent with local and state laws;
- Follow requirements and guidelines from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and CDC on which individuals are eligible and should be prioritized for vaccination;
- Monitor national safety and efficacy data for all FDA authorized or approved vaccines in use;
- Continue providing education about the efficacy and safety of COVID-19 vaccines to encourage staff to obtain the vaccine voluntarily; and
- Offer scheduling flexibility and/or time off to ensure personnel have time to obtain the vaccine and recover from its possible side effects.