



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
CITY OF CHICAGO

July 21, 2021

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH), based on the best science¹, strongly recommends that healthcare facilities require COVID-19 vaccination for all healthcare employees. Ensuring vaccination of healthcare employees is part of a healthcare facility's commitment to patient and employee safety and aligned with hospital and health systems' ongoing role in protecting the public and healthcare personnel from COVID-19. Protecting healthcare employees through vaccination ensures the availability of critical resources to serve our communities.

Chicago hospitals and health systems have been on the front lines of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing testing, clinical care, and vaccination (approximately 988,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine to-date). The available COVID-19 vaccines have been rigorously studied, are safe, and data show high levels of real-world effectiveness in both healthcare personnel and the general population. COVID-19 vaccines are the most effective way to curb the spread of COVID-19 and reduce hospitalizations and deaths.

To date, approximately 70% of all Chicago area hospital and health system employees have been fully vaccinated, along with more than 6.3 million Illinoisians overall, and about 161.2 million Americans. Protecting patients, visitors, and healthcare personnel from COVID-19 infection is critically important, and the most effective way to do this is to ensure that all hospital and health system employees are vaccinated against COVID-19.

Medical and religious exemptions should be determined by each hospital and health system, with exemptions requiring approval by employee health. To support COVID-19 vaccination requirements, education sessions on the vaccine and the opportunity to have questions about the vaccine answered by physicians, nurses, and pharmacists should be available for employees and staff. All hospital and health systems should continue to require other infection control measures, including wearing masks and other personal protective equipment, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and other measures as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Chicago healthcare community has a history of coming together and committing to serve patients with contagious diseases and protect the public from transmission.² CDPH stands ready to support our healthcare partners who commit to protecting their patients and employees from COVID-19 infection by ensuring that all hospital and health system employees are vaccinated against COVID-19.

References:

1. COVID-19 Science Update released: June 25, 2021 Edition 95
2. Omar Lateef, Bala Hota, Emily Landon, Larry K. Kociolek, Julie Morita, Stephanie Black, Gary Noskin, Michael Kelleher, Krista Curell, Amy Galat, David Ansell, John Segreti, Stephen G. Weber. Chicago Ebola Response Network (CERN): A Citywide Cross-hospital Collaborative for Infectious Disease Preparedness. *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 2015; civ510 DOI: [10.1093/cid/civ510](https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/civ510)