



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Division of State Operated Health Facilities

ROY COOPER • Governor
MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary
KODY H. KINSLEY • Chief Deputy Secretary for Health
KAREN BURKES • Interim Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Facility Staff
FROM: Karen Burkes, Interim Division Director
Carrie Brown, MD, Chief Medical Officer for Behavioral Health & IDD
Date: July 27, 2021
Re: COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement

Thank you for your hard work and dedicated service, especially in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of those we serve, and that of our staff, is our top priority. The [Delta variant](#) is now the predominant strain of the COVID-19 virus in North Carolina -- it is 65% more transmissible than the original virus, and there are clear spikes in cases and hospitalizations in communities with low vaccination rates. Since May, more than 94% of new COVID-19 cases in North Carolina have occurred in people who are not fully vaccinated.

All facility employees, volunteers, students, trainees, contracted, and temporary workers must be fully vaccinated by September 30, 2021.

Vaccination for COVID-19 is the most effective prevention against the disease. Over 75% of DSOHF Facility Staff are vaccinated, with three facilities over 90%. As a healthcare system, we have a responsibility to protect the patients and residents that we serve – many of whom are at high risk for COVID-19 complications, are without other options for care, and in our care for long periods of time. It is well documented that healthcare personnel often unintentionally introduce the virus into institutional settings prompting an outbreak.

Last week, the North Carolina Healthcare Association and its board of trustees [issued support](#) for requiring COVID-19 vaccination of employees. At the same time, several major health systems and hospitals in North Carolina announced that they will require COVID-19 vaccination for all healthcare employees. Earlier this month, a [consensus statement](#) and analysis from multiple societies, including but not limited to, the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology and The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine, recommended that COVID-19 vaccination should be a condition of employment for all healthcare personnel. Over 50 groups, including the American Medical Association and the American Nursing Association, [called on employers to require](#) COVID-19 vaccination for all healthcare and long-term care staff.

All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States are safe and effective at preventing COVID-19 and virus-related hospitalization and death. All three COVID-19 vaccines will be widely available through a variety of sources: your facility or a partner facility will host vaccination clinics, and many retail pharmacies, physician's offices, and other community sites will provide vaccinations at no cost. Visit [MySpot.nc.gov](https://www.myspot.nc.gov) to find a location in your community.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has [issued guidance](#) outlining that employers may require vaccination, with the appropriate implementation of the reasonable accommodation process. Exemption application forms are available through your worksite. In the coming days, your facility will provide additional information to you regarding vaccine clinics and the vaccine policy attestation. Also, staff will be available to answer any questions that you may have. In addition, you can find accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines at [YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov](https://www.yourspotyourshot.nc.gov).

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