

King County Health Care Systems' Statement of Support for Vaccine Verification

As leaders in the provision of healthcare in King County, we strongly support requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccine or negative test for large sporting and entertainment events and establishments such as restaurants, bars and gyms.

COVID-19 infections can be spread from people who are symptom-free and before symptoms appear. The virus is spreading quickly in King County largely because of the more contagious Delta variant and an increase in activities and opportunities for COVID transmission.

When unvaccinated people gather with others at large events and crowded indoor establishments, they are at risk both of getting COVID-19 themselves as well as spreading it to others. Furthermore, as King County data indicate, people who are not fully vaccinated are 41 times more likely to be hospitalized for COVID-19 compared to those who are fully vaccinated.

This transmission risk is resulting in waves of outbreaks that are threatening the capacity of our health care system. Hospitals across our region are operating above 98 percent capacity, with more than 25 percent of ICU bed filled by COVID-19 patients, limiting access to timely care for others.

State agencies and partners are responding to this crisis with proposals to address short staffing, create more bed availability by finding appropriate placement for people who are ready to be discharged and by building capacity in community for monoclonal antibody access. These measures are helpful but not sufficient. Strong community mitigation measures to reduce transmission risk are essential at this time.

For these reasons, we stand in support of requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccine or negative test to large sporting and entertainment events and establishments such as restaurants, bars and gyms. This guidance is part of a multi-layered approach to preventing COVID-19 infection and is vitally important to protecting health care capacity for our community members, in addition to other protective measures such as social distancing, masking and ventilation.

Evergreen Healthcare	Jeff Tomlin	Chief Executive Officer
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center	Tom Lynch, MD	President and Director
Kaiser Permanente	Paul A. Thottingal, MD	National Infectious Disease Director
King County Medical Society	Nancy L. Belcher, Ph.D.	Chief Executive Officer
Overlake Medical Center	J. Michael Marsh	President and Chief Executive Officer
Seattle Cancer Care Alliance	Nancy E Davidson, MD	President and Executive Director
Seattle Children's Hospital	Ruth McDonald, MD	VP and Associate Chief Medical Officer
SEIU Healthcare 1199NW	Jane Hopkins, RN	Executive Vice President
Swedish Health Services	R. Guy Hudson, MD	Chief Executive Officer
UFCW 21	Faye Guenther	President
UW Medicine	Tim Dellit, MD	Chief Medical Officer
Virginia Mason Franciscan Health	Katerie Chapman	President
Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics	Sarah Rafton, MSW	Executive Director
Washington State Medical Association	Nathan Schlicher, MD	President
Washington State Nurses Association	David Keepnews, PhD, JD, RN, FAAN	Executive Director