

Statement from Public Health – Seattle & King County Health Officer Jeff Duchin on mandatory vaccinations for healthcare personnel – July 30, 2021

Public Health Seattle & King County (PHSKC) endorses the following statements representing a wide range of medical, nursing, hospital, public health, and other health professional societies and organizations recommending mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for healthcare personnel (HCP) and strongly encourages healthcare facilities in King County to follow these recommendations:

- 1) The [multisociety statement](#) on *COVID-19 Vaccination as a Condition of Employment of Healthcare Personnel* from the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) and The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (AMDA), the Association for Professionals in Epidemiology and Infection Control (APIC), the HIV Medicine Association (HIVMA), the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), the Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society (PIDS), and the Society of Infectious Diseases Pharmacists (SIDP), **recommending that COVID-19 vaccination should be a condition of employment for all healthcare personnel;**
- 2) The [multi-society joint statement](#) on *COVID-19 Vaccination as a Condition of Employment for Healthcare Personnel*, **calling for all health care and long-term care employers to require their employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19** and signed by 31 national professional organizations including the American Medical Association (AMA), American College of Physicians (ACP) and American Academy of Nursing (AAN); and,
- 3) *The American Hospital Association (AHA) [Policy Statement](#) on Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination of Health Care Personnel* **urging the vaccination of all health care personnel and supporting hospitals and health systems that adopt mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies.**
- 4) The [American Nurses Association](#) (ANA), representing the interests of the nation's 4.2 million registered nurses, **supports health care employers mandating nurses and all health care personnel to get vaccinated against COVID-19** in alignment with current recommendations for immunization by public health officials.

Exemptions from mandatory vaccination policy apply to those with medical contraindications to all COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States and other exemptions as specified by law.

Vaccination of HCP against COVID-19 increases the safety of the vaccinated HCW, their patients, families, co-workers and the community at large in several ways, including:

- Individual protection against COVID-19 infection, including currently circulating strains
- Reduces the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death
- Protection for patients and HCP who are unable to receive COVID-19 vaccination

- Protection for patients who are not able to mount an adequate immune response and/or are at high risk for severe COVID-19
- Reduced risk of asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic transmission of SARS-CoV-2 to patients and co-workers
- Reduced risk of transmitting SARS-CoV-2 to household members and community contacts
- Increased protection for the healthcare workforce in the community setting

The COVID-19 vaccines under FDA EUA have similar safety profiles to vaccines that are currently fully FDA-approved, shown by efficacy trials and effectiveness studies.

Prior experience and current information suggest that a sufficient vaccination rate in healthcare settings is unlikely to be achieved without making COVID-19 vaccination a condition of employment.

For persons with medical contraindications or other legally permissible exemptions to COVID-19 vaccination, an employer may require employees to comply with accommodations in lieu of receiving the vaccine. Accommodations may include providing an alternative form of the vaccine, requiring an exempted employee to wear a face mask, and/or requiring an exempted employee to follow physical distancing measures (including reassignment away from vulnerable patient populations, curtailing job duties to lessen or eliminate direct patient contact, undergo frequent COVID-19 surveillance testing, or allowing the employee to work remotely if feasible).

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