

COVID UPDATE MEETING

State Mandate Leader Q&A

08-18-2021

Q: Are religious exemptions allowed with the state law? One team member thought the state law allowed this exemption category.

A: The current state now only allows exemptions for medical reasons. The law was signed on May 24, 2019 and goes into effect September 1, 2021.

Q: What is the definition of contractor required to be vaccinated?

A: We consider anyone who wears a CMH badge to be a team member. For the state vaccination requirements, we will start with those team members whom we pay directly.

Q: If a team member gets a medical exemption are there any additional requirements of them, such as additional testing or identification?

A: With the announcement of the new state mandate, we have paused our work on surveillance testing to concentrate on education and vaccination. Testing may be considered an option in the future.

Q: Is funding or paid time available to help team members visit a physician?

A: No. Also, be aware that approved medical providers under the state mandate are physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Q: Is a medical visit required to get a letter for medical exemption? If so, is it considered a wellness visit and is therefore less costly?

A: Please speak to your approved medical provider (physician, physician assistant and nurse practitioner) about this.

Q: One team member would want to wean her child off breastfeeding if she takes the vaccine. Is FMLA available to provide time to do this?

A: Please speak to your Leave of Absence/Family Medical Leave Act administrator about individual circumstances.

Q: If a team member got a medical exemption for the flu vaccine can it be used for a COVID-19 medical exemption?

A: No, the exemption is specific to the particular vaccine.

Q: If a team member is sick after getting the vaccine, is extra CT / paid time off made available for them?

A: Yes. Under OSHA rules, the employer must support COVID-19 vaccination for each team member by providing reasonable time and paid leave (e.g., paid sick leave, administrative leave) to each team member for vaccination and any side effects experienced following vaccination. CMH team members can use their Extended Sick Bank before using Choice Time. For more information see Question 81 at [COVID-19 Healthcare ETS - Frequently Asked Questions | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](#)

Q: If a team member is seeking an appointment with a physician, NP and PA but is unable to make an appointment before October 1 due to lack of availability and can show effort at making that appointment,

would they be provided more time to obtain an exemption letter?

A: There is no other exception to the “fully vaccinated by October 1” state requirement.

Q: To be fully immunized by October 1, team members receiving Pfizer would need to get their first dose by Aug 27 correct? (three (3) weeks between doses plus two (2) weeks for immunity to take effect). Or are we saying that the second dose just needs to happen by October 1?

A: To be fully vaccinated, the team member must be 2 weeks post final vaccine dose in series by October 1.

Q: I have a team member who is pregnant, and has already received her first dose, but is delaying dose 2 until after her baby is born (~late September). Does she need to show proof of second dose before October 1 to be on FMLA? Or does she need to show proof of second dose before she returns to work after her FMLA?

A: Vaccination is not a condition for FMLA but is a condition for return to work. She would need to be two weeks post final vaccine dose in the series to return to work.

Q: What is the disciplinary process if I choose not to get vaccinated and not have a medical exemption?

A: There is no disciplinary process. This is a state requirement to work in healthcare.

Q: Can I get unemployment if I lose my job?

A: That determination is made of the State of Maine.

Q: When will a list of my department members be distributed to start having conversations?

A: We are cleaning up the lists of people for whom we have no record of vaccination so that leaders can ask them to get their record to Occupational Health.

Q: Are we including the flu vaccine in our communication?

A: Yes, starting August 18, 2021.

Q: If I have specific questions about the vaccine and I want to speak to a provider with specific expertise. Who can I communicate with and how?

A: The following providers have offered to have one-on-one conversations with team members:

- Dr. Jennifer Weiner-Smith (Obstetrics and Gynecology) SmithJe@cmhc.org
- Dr. Steven Constantino (Anesthesia/Surgical Services) Constast@cmhc.org
- Dr. Michael Stadnicki (Primary Care) StadniMi@cmhc.org
- Dr. David Salko (Primary Care) SalkoDav@cmhc.org
- Dr. Jenae Limoges (Epidemiology and Infection) LimogeJe@cmhc.org
- Dr. Al Teng (Pulmonology and Intensive Care) TengEr@cmhc.org
- Dr. Claudia Geyer (Hospital Medicine) *Careware* or GeyerCla@cmhc.org
- Dr. Bethany Picker (Family Practice) *Careware* or PickerBe@cmhc.org
- Dr. Sheldon Stevenson (Emergency Medicine) stevensh1@cmhc.org