



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600

September 28, 2021

ALTA: AFH #2021-054
ALTA: ALF #2021-054
ALTA: NH #2021-076
ALTA: ESF #2021-048
ALTA: ICF/IID #2021-045
ALTA: CCRSS #2021-049

IMPLEMENTATION OF VACCINE MANDATE REQUIREMENTS AND REVIEW

Dear Provider/Administrator/Superintendent:

This letter is to address questions about medical and religious exemptions to vaccination and implementation of [proclamation 21-14](#) requiring most state employees, private health care, and long-term care workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Please review the following for a general outline of expectations:

- On October 18, 2021, all health care providers who engage in work for your program, in the healthcare setting, either through direct employment, by contract with your program, or as a volunteer for your program, must be fully vaccinated unless exempt for medical or religious reasons.
- The provider must visually verify vaccination but does not need to retain copies of an employee or volunteer vaccination record. At a minimum the provider must keep a written record of all vaccination confirmations.
- For contractor employees working onsite, the provider can either visually verify vaccination for all employees and document this verification or require contractors to provide the community with a declaration stating that they have verified vaccination and offered exemptions in accordance with the law for all contractor employees who will be working at the community.
- If a person is not fully vaccinated and has not received an exemption, they must not be employed by your program after October 18, 2021.
 - If an employee has requested an exemption for religious or medical reasons, the employer/provider is required to follow the reasonable accommodation laws to decide regarding the request. If the employer/provider determines the accommodation request is approved, the employer/provider must document the following:
 - The employer's/provider's ability to meet the accommodation needs of the employee within the scope of the employer's/provider's business;
 - If the employer/provider can accommodate the employee, how will the accommodation be implemented while also assuring the health and safety of the residents/clients are protected;
 - If an accommodation allows for continued contact with others (residents/clients, staff, visitors) with safety measures such as use of more rigorous PPE (i.e., fit tested N95 always use in the building) and/or a stringent testing schedule, who will pay for the extra equipment and testing;

Dear Provider: Implementation of Vaccine Mandate Requirements and Review

September 28, 2021

Page 2

- If the accommodation requires reassignment of the employee to a job that does not have in-person contact with others, or the employee already has a job that can easily transition to no in-person contact, how the employer/provider will assure the accommodated person is not in contact with others in the building/home;
- If stringent testing is used as a part of the accommodation, at what frequency the testing will be done. Note: testing frequency for the accommodation should be greater than the recommended testing frequency by the Local Health Jurisdiction, Department of Health, or Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services. How the employer/provider will verify each test is completed by the employee.
- How will compliance with accommodation measures be monitored.

Residential Care Services (RCS) will not conduct vaccine focused inspections. Provider compliance with the proclamation will be confirmed during routine licensing inspections, surveys, certification evaluations, investigations of complaints related to the vaccine proclamation, and focused infection control surveys. The enforcement process related to compliance with the proclamation will follow standard procedures which may include consultation, citation, or further action depending on the specific situation.

If you have any questions, please contact the Policy Unit mailbox at rcspolicy@dshs.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Mike Anbesse, Director
Residential Care Services

DSHS: "Transforming Lives"