



February 1, 2022

Dear Health Care Facility Administrators:

It is paramount to the health and safety of America's patients for health care facility workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Some of you are already requiring your staff to be vaccinated. Others may have been waiting on a resolution to litigation issues. No matter your current practices, my message to you is simple – now is the time to make sure health care workers are vaccinated. We are moving full speed ahead on implementing our vaccination rule in the District of Columbia, the territories, and all 50 states.

We recommend reviewing the guidance CMS released on [December 28, 2021](#); [January 14, 2022](#); and [January 20, 2022](#) for additional information. We are prepared to help you navigate any challenges and answer questions you have as you make sure your employees are vaccinated.

Last month, the United States Supreme Court stayed two preliminary injunctions that had prohibited the implementation and enforcement of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) healthcare staff vaccination rule in 24 states, and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas granted a motion for voluntary dismissal of a related case in Texas. As a result, the [Omnibus Health Care Staff Vaccination rule](#) is now in effect nationwide. This will enable us to act to protect patients.

Patient lives are at risk. We know that health care workers across the country want to do everything they can to protect their patients. It's what they do every day. Vaccine requirements work. We have heard about many best practices from providers across the nation on effective employee engagement strategies, including: one-on-one informational interviews to answer individual concerns and open panel discussions with diverse groups of clinicians to give honest answers to questions and combat misinformation.

We have seen that health care systems that implement vaccine requirements are not experiencing dramatic staff losses. Vaccinated staff are instead more available to work since they are less likely to get sick. Increasing the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, including the booster shot, is the most important tool you have against staffing shortages. As COVID-19's Omicron variant causes your capacity to be stretched to its limit yet again, the best thing you can do is immediately implement policies and procedures to ensure vaccination of your employees. And you can tell front-line heroes the truth: that vaccination is the best defense against this virus, and their patients need them to be healthy now more than ever.

CMS stands ready to support you as you engage in this important work. Please act today so we can finally defeat COVID-19 together.

Sincerely,
Chiquita Brooks-LaSure
Administrator