



July 29, 2021

## COVID-19 Update – COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement

Dear Faculty, Staff and Students:

After a period of discernment to review scientific data, consult with internal and external experts, and consider other factors, **the Medical College of Wisconsin has decided to require our employees and learners to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, or to have an approved exemption for medical or religious reasons by 5 p.m. on November 1, 2021. Specifically, the first dose of Moderna or Pfizer vaccines should be administered by September 20, 2021, with the second dose administered by October 18, 2021.**

Our decision was made in response to the growing threat of the COVID-19 Delta variant, and the possibility that other more contagious or virulent strains of COVID-19 will emerge if the pandemic continues to smolder. Our decision represents the strong consensus of our leadership team and is consistent with those made by many other healthcare and educational institutions. A growing number of healthcare professional societies and organizations have endorsed mandatory vaccinations for healthcare providers, employees, and health professions learners. Indeed, MCW belongs to and holds prominent leadership roles in many of the organizations that have endorsed mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations. The COVID-19 vaccines available in the U.S. are efficacious, have favorable safety profiles, and make virtually all COVID-19 deaths preventable.

We believe that we have a responsibility to protect those who seek care from our healthcare teams, especially vulnerable individuals who are not yet eligible for vaccination (children under 12 years old), those who are unable to mount adequate immune responses (for example, cancer patients, transplantation patients, patients with renal failure or rheumatological disorders, patients with HIV), and those with conditions that predispose to COVID-19 breakthrough infections (advanced age, obesity, cardiac and pulmonary diseases, *etc.*). Our patients and our communities expect nothing less from us. Additionally, a vaccinated employee and learner population allows us to provide a richer in-person experience, and our campus community to interact more safely.

We also believe that healthcare organizations, especially academic medical centers, need to lead the way by setting an example of best public health practices, and social responsibility for our stakeholders, vulnerable

communities, and our region. MCW has been a trusted leader throughout the pandemic, and our community wants us to lead now, with both our words and our actions. We must demonstrate our commitment to, and leadership for, public health and the health of our patients and communities.

**Unvaccinated individuals will receive additional communications with details about obtaining a COVID-19 vaccination**, and the process for requesting a vaccination exemption, consistent with our practice for other required vaccinations. Employees and learners whose roles are classified as exclusively (100%) virtual and who anticipate no on-site presence in any owned or leased facility of MCW or any of its affiliate partners are encouraged to receive COVID-19 vaccinations, but as of now, will not be required to receive COVID-19 vaccinations so long as their duties are 100% virtual. Individuals who receive a medical or religious exemption will be expected to cooperate with mitigation measures including periodic COVID-19 diagnostic testing.

If you believe that your vaccination status is not accurate, please e-mail a copy of your vaccination card, when you are considered fully vaccinated, to [IOHcovid@froedtert.com](mailto:IOHcovid@froedtert.com) with the subject line, "COVID Vaccine Records." For MSA, Pharmacy and Medical students, please also submit documentation of your COVID-19 vaccination to [CastleBranch](#). For graduate students, please submit documentation of your COVID-19 vaccination(s) to [Angie Backus](#).

Please be aware that affiliate institutions may require COVID-19 vaccinations at an earlier date; and that all employees and learners, including housestaff, must comply with any policies of the facilities in which they work or learn, in addition to MCW policies and procedures.

The following link provides answers to [Vaccination Frequently Asked Questions](#).

We are grateful for all you have done to care for our patients, communities and each other throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We express our gratitude that we have achieved nearly 90% voluntary vaccination rates among our employees and learners, but we must do even better to maintain the trust of those who depend on us for healthcare and leadership.

Should you have additional questions related to this guidance, please email [COVID@mcw.edu](mailto:COVID@mcw.edu).

Kind Regards,