

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Executive Order Strengthening COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements for Workers in Health Care and Congregate Settings and Requiring COVID-19 Booster Doses

01/19/2022

GALLOWAY – Governor Phil Murphy today signed Executive Order No. 283, requiring covered workers at health care facilities and high-risk congregate settings to be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations, including having received a booster dose. All covered workers will be required to be vaccinated by the dates set forth in the Order and will no longer be permitted to submit to testing as an alternative to vaccination, except for the purposes of providing an accommodation for individuals exempt from vaccination as set forth in the covered setting's vaccination policy. This requirement aims to strengthen protection against the spread of COVID-19 and the highly transmissible Omicron variant to vulnerable populations across the state.

"With the highly transmissible Omicron variant spreading across the country and New Jersey, it is essential that we do everything we can to protect our most vulnerable populations," **said Governor Murphy**. "With immunity waning approximately five months after a primary COVID-19 vaccination, receiving a booster dose is necessary to protect yourself and those around you. It is critically important that we slow the spread throughout our health care and congregate settings in order to protect our vulnerable populations and the staff that care for them."

"The resilience of New Jersey's healthcare workforce and the safety of the patients and long-term care residents they serve is paramount," **said New Jersey Department of Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. "Health care workers are on the frontline serving our most vulnerable so it is critical that they get booster shots to protect not only themselves and their families but those they care for every day."

For purposes of this Order, health care and high-risk congregate settings include:

- Acute, pediatric, inpatient rehabilitation, and psychiatric hospitals, including specialty hospitals, and ambulatory surgical centers
- Long-term care facilities, including the state veterans homes
- Intermediate care facilities, including the state developmental centers
- Residential detox, short-term and long-term residential substance abuse disorder treatment facilities
- Clinic-based settings like ambulatory care, urgent care clinics, dialysis centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers, family planning sites, and opioid treatment programs
- Community-based health care settings including Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, and pediatric and adult medical day care programs
- Licensed home health agencies and registered health care service firms operating within the state
- State and county correctional facilities
- Secure care facilities and residential community homes operated by the Juvenile Justice Commission
- Licensed community residences for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Licensed community residences for adults with mental illness
- Certified day programs for individuals with IDD and TBI; and
- Group homes and psychiatric community homes licensed by DCF

For purposes of this Order, workers are defined as:

- Full and part-time employees
- Contractors
- Other individuals working in the covered setting, including individuals providing operational, custodial, or administrative support

Health care facilities' covered workers subject to the Biden Administration's vaccine mandate for health care settings will have until January 27, 2022, to obtain their first dose of the primary series of a COVID-19 vaccination and submit proof that they are up to date with their vaccination by February 28, 2022, which includes having completed their primary series and any booster shots for which they are eligible. This timeline is consistent with the Biden Administration's federal vaccine mandate for health care settings.

Health care facilities' covered workers not subject to the Biden Administration's vaccine mandate for health care settings and high-risk congregate care covered workers will have until February 16, 2022 to obtain their first dose of the primary series of a COVID-19 vaccination and submit proof that they are up to date with their vaccination by March 30, 2022.

Workers who become newly eligible for a booster shot after the respective February 28 and March 30 deadlines will be required to submit proof of their booster shot within three weeks of becoming eligible. Executive Order No. 283 also requires that covered workers currently subject to testing under Executive Order No. 252 must continue once to twice weekly testing until they provide adequate proof that they are up to date with their vaccinations based on the respective February 28 and March 30 deadlines.

Additionally, the Order requires covered settings to have a disciplinary process for noncompliance, including and up to termination of employment. This Order will not impact a setting's ability to impose more stringent vaccination or testing requirements on workers, including any requirement for more frequent testing.

For a copy of Executive Order No. 283, click here. (<https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/pdf/EO-283.pdf>)

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