

ABOUT THE CMS VACCINE REQUIREMENT

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has issued a vaccine mandate that requires healthcare workers at facilities that participate in Medicare and Medicaid to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. As of Thursday, January 13, the mandate will go into effect nationwide by issue of the Supreme Court.

Who must be vaccinated according to the CMS Final Ruling regarding vaccine requirements?

- The vaccination requirements apply to all eligible staff, both current and new, working at a facility regardless of clinical responsibility or patient contact, including:
 - Facility Employees
 - Licensed Practitioners
 - Students
 - Trainees
 - Volunteers
 - Contracted Staff
- The vaccination requirements also apply to staff who perform duties offsite (e.g. home health, home infusion therapy, etc.) and to individuals who enter into a CMS regulated facility.

What is the deadline to be vaccinated?

- The compliance deadline for ELC Centers in Maryland and Wisconsin is **February 28, 2022**.
 - By January 27, 2022, all employees must have received at least one dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.
 - By February 28, 2022, all employees must have received their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines (the recommended interval between doses is 21 days for Pfizer-BioNTech and 28 days for Moderna.)
- The compliance deadline for ELC Centers in Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and West Virginia is **March 15, 2022**.
 - By February 14, 2022 all employees must have received at least one dose of an approved COVID-19 vaccine.
 - By March 15, 2022, all employees must have received their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines (the recommended interval between doses is 21 days for Pfizer-BioNTech and 28 days for Moderna.)
- Compliance can be required through one of the following:
 - Fully vaccinated
- Approved medical or religious exemption (see About Vaccine Exemptions)
- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the definition of fully vaccinated is two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

I am fully vaccinated. Do I have to receive the booster shot to comply with the new guidelines?

- No. The CDC recommends that eligible individuals receive a booster shot in addition to their primary vaccine series, but a booster is not required under the CMS rules for health care workers.

I've had COVID-19. Do I still have to get vaccinated?

- Yes.

What if I contract COVID-19 between now and the deadline?

- As soon as you have cleared from the health department and out of quarantine, you are eligible to be vaccinated.
- If you have received an antibody infusion, you must wait 90 days to be vaccinated. If these timelines prohibit you from being fully vaccinated by the deadline, please complete a Medical Exemption.

Does the CMS requirement apply to assisted living facilities?

- At this time, the vaccine requirement does not apply to assisted living or personal care communities.

ABOUT VACCINE EXEMPTIONS

Eligible employees are encouraged to submit their exemption requests following the guidelines below.

What exemptions are available to employees?

- Recognized medical conditions for which vaccines are contraindicated
- Religious beliefs, observances, or practices

How does an employee apply for an exemption?

- Medical exemptions require a letter from your physician. Your HR/BOM can provide a form to provide guidance for medical submissions upon request.
- Religious-related exemptions require a letter outlining the following points:
 - Identify religious denomination
 - Identify specific church and contact at that church
 - Provide information as to the duration of membership with specific church
 - Identify church doctrine on which claimed exemption is based
 - Identify church's history with respect to its position on vaccination prior to COVID
- Employees granted medical or religious exemptions will be required to wear full PPE while on duty and must agree to regular (daily or weekly) testing.
- Please remember, simply submitting the request does not guarantee it will be accommodated.
- Every submission will be reviewed by the corporate office for its unique circumstances and the employee will receive a written response once a determination has been made.
- Questions about medical and religious exemptions can be submitted to benefits@exceptionallivingcenters.com.

Will ELC hire new employees that have exemptions?

- Yes. New employees will follow the same policies and procedures as current employees.

What happens if my exemption request is approved?

- An unvaccinated person may not have routine direct contact with at risk individuals and therefore are eligible for the following positions with the following accommodations.

Potential positions for exempted staff could include but are not limited to:

- Food service director

- Food service assistant
- Cook
- MDS coordinator
- Business office director
- Business office assistant
- HR specialist
- HR payroll

Potential accommodations for exempted staff could include but are not limited to:

- Testing
- Physical Distancing
- Source Control (Masks, etc.)

What happens if my exemption request is denied?

- If an employee is not vaccinated by the deadlines stated in the CMS Final Rule and has not been approved for an exemption, it will result in a voluntary resignation, effective immediately.
- Employees in good standing will remain eligible for rehire once they become vaccinated.
- For information on unemployment eligibility in your state, please contact your state unemployment office:
 - Kentucky: <https://uiclaimsportal.ky.gov/s/>
 - Wisconsin: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui/>
 - Indiana: <https://www.in.gov/dwd/indiana-unemployment/>
 - Ohio: <https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/>
 - West Virginia: <https://workforcewv.org/unemployment>
 - Maryland: <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/unemployment.shtml>

ABOUT THE COVID VACCINE

How do I sign up for a COVID-19 vaccine?

- Ask your Executive Director or Vaccine Ambassador about the next onsite vaccine clinic. In the meantime, employees can be vaccinated at any local pharmacy. COVID-19 vaccines are free to all Americans.

Can I choose which vaccine to get?

- Yes. While certain vaccines may only be available at our onsite vaccine clinics, employees are welcome to receive any of the following vaccines:
 - Pfizer-BioNTech COVID19 Vaccine (interchangeable with the licensed Comirnaty vaccine)
 - Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine
 - Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 Vaccine
- Please note that it is recommended that subsequent injections (second dose or booster) are the same brand as any previous injections (i.e. if your first dose of the vaccine was Moderna, your second dose and booster dose should also be Moderna).

COVID-19 VACCINE REQUIREMENT FAQ

If an employee comes into work on their day off for a vaccine clinic, should they clock in?

- No. All employees who choose to be vaccinated will be awarded with extra PTO (half day for part time employees, full day for full time employees) to cover personal time taken to get the vaccine, whether at one of our clinics or local pharmacy.

If an employee has a reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine that requires time off from work, do they use accrued PTO?

- Yes.

If an employee has a reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine, will it be covered under workers' compensation?

- Workers' compensation insurance helps protect businesses and their employees from financial loss when an employee is hurt on the job or gets sick from a work-related cause.
- If an employee has a reaction to a COVID vaccine they received at work which results in a financial loss, we encourage them to apply for workers' compensation.
- For more information, contact your center Human Resources or Business Office Manager or email benefits@exceptionallivingcenters.com.

Do visitors need to be vaccinated?

- No, visitors are not required to be vaccinated to enter our facilities. Visitors who have a positive viral test for COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, or currently meet the criteria for quarantine should not enter the facility. Facilities should screen all who enter for these visitation exclusions.

QUESTIONS & CONCERNS

Who do I contact if I have other questions or concerns?

- Talk with your Executive Director, Vaccine Ambassador or email benefits@exceptionallivingcenters.com.