

The COVID-19 Vaccine Saves Lives, and We Have a Voice in How We Roll Out the Vaccine Mandate at DSHS/DOH/DCYF

The Vaccine Mandate

On August 9, the state of Washington made it mandatory for all healthcare workers to become fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 18. As healthcare workers, we agree that the COVID vaccines are safe, effective, and the best way to protect ourselves and our families from COVID-19. But as members of a union, we know that we have the right to bargain any changes to our jobs. Members from locations across the state came together to bargain the impacts of the vaccine mandate and used the following values to guide us in those conversations.



“This was a particularly challenging demand to bargain. We had some wins and ways to monitor the process. It will be imperative for those that have a denial of accommodation or exemption to communicate this to your delegate or SEIU. This will allow us to identify trends of discrimination, unilateral denial, as well as unfair labor practices and respond to them immediately.” - **Onnika Merkle, RN3, 3S1/FSU, ESH**

Our Values as a Union

- Every worker deserves a safe workplace.
- As union members, we have the right to bargain this change in working conditions.
- We trust science and understand that the vaccine is an important component to getting the pandemic under control.
- We will not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Vaccine information and access must be made available in workers’ preferred languages. No worker will be made to wear a sticker or button that shows vaccination status.
- While vaccines are incredibly effective, they do not replace adequate and safe PPE and safe ventilation in our workplaces.
- Getting the vaccine must be as accessible as possible, including offering them on work time and paid time off for side effects.
- Employers must maintain safe staffing levels by doing everything in their power to staff to patient census while minimizing use of mandatory overtime: offering overtime, incentive shifts, referral and hiring bonuses, and utilizing travelers and agency workers.



“Nurses, one purpose, one voice, with strength, commitment, and dedication. As union members we protected our rights and held management accountable to be fair and equitable while members make the best choices for themselves as well as in processing all individual exemptions and accommodations.” - **Lisa Mason, MSN, RCS Licensor/Nurse Consultant, SEIU Executive Board Member**

Important dates to be fully vaccinated by October 18

Vaccine	Series dose requirement	First dose no later than	Second dose
Pfizer	2 doses, 21 days apart	09/13/21 (today)	10/04/21
Moderna	2 doses, 28 days apart	09/06/21	10/04/21
Janssen/J&J	Single dose	10/04/21	N/A

Our Vaccine Mandate MOU Highlights

Who is impacted by the vaccine mandate?	All employees
How to be compliant?	Be fully vaccinated prior to October 18 and provide proof of vaccination.

Highlights continued on flip side 

Our Vaccine Mandate MOU Highlights (cont'd)

Can I still be vaccinated?	Yes. The employer will assist in identifying vaccination site with available appointments. If you live in a remote area or have other difficulties, contact your local HR. Time spent traveling to the vaccination site and time spent receiving the vaccine are considered hours worked. The employer may require that the time be supported by documentation, which may include proof of vaccination.
If I have an approved religious or medical exemption, what's next?	If a request for an exemption is approved, the employer will review if an accommodation is possible. We have the right to have a union delegate present at accommodation meetings.
What if I want to get the vaccine but recently contracted COVID?	Make sure you file for a medical exemption and seek temporary reasonable accommodation until you can safely get vaccinated.
What if I am in the process of being vaccinated, but will not be fully vaccinated by October 18?	If you receive the first dose of the vaccination late, you may use leave without pay for up to thirty (30) days and retain the right to return to your previous position OR a vacant position in the same job class at your work location provided you have become fully vaccinated and the employer has not permanently filled your previous position. This provision expires on November 17, 2021.
What if I don't comply?	If a worker has not initiated an exemption request and fails to provide proof of vaccination by October 18, 2021, the worker will be subject to non-disciplinary separation. Workers who are subject to non-disciplinary separation shall be eligible for state employment upon becoming fully vaccinated.
How are we keeping our units staffed?	All agencies will make every effort to maintain staffing levels and post positions vacated due to the mandate. Vacated positions will be posted as soon as possible, and nurses wishing to bid into a newly vacated positions must have a current bid request with HR and must respond to an offer within in 72 hours, or the position will be offered the next most senior nurse.

To see the full MOU,
visit 1199nwcovidresponse.org/vaccine



Are you a member of our union at DSHS?

One way to make sure DSHS DOH remains a great place to work and to keep our union strong is by joining your coworkers and becoming a member. You can join SEIU Healthcare 1199NW by filling out an electronic card!

joinseiu1199nw.org



scan this QR code with
your phone camera to
become a member!

