

UW Health: Requires all providers and staff to receive COVID-19 vaccination

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UW Health requires all providers and staff to receive COVID-19 vaccination

MADISON, Wis. – UW Health is announcing a new requirement that providers and staff receive a COVID-19 vaccination, in line with its pre-existing requirement to receive a flu vaccine.

While 90% of UW Health's staff are already fully vaccinated, there is room for further improvement and there is an opportunity to send a good message to patients, staff and the broader community, according to Dr. Jeff Pothof, chief quality officer, UW Health.

“These vaccines are safe; they are effective at preventing transmission; and for those who do contract COVID-19, they reduce the possibility of serious illness, hospitalizations or even death,” Pothof said. “As we confront the rapid spread of COVID-19 throughout Wisconsin, driven by the delta variant, we want to do everything possible to protect our staff, our patients and our community.”

Vaccine doses and appointments are available right now for both staff and patients.

As part of UW Health's new policy, employees must start their COVID-19 vaccination no later than Oct. 1 and receive a second dose (or final dose for single-dose vaccines) by Nov. 1. Staff who have a documented medical condition that prevents them from being vaccinated or a religious conviction as defined in state law can file for an exemption to the vaccine requirement.

The more contagious COVID-19 delta variant is now responsible for more than 80% of the new cases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the most effective way to prevent people from severe illness or worse, is to get the vaccine, Pothof said.

To date, more than 4 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered globally with very few serious side effects.

"Throughout almost 18 months of pandemic response, the safety of our staff, our patients and our community has guided every decision we made," Pothof said. "Today we are taking a next important step to vaccinate our community, because these vaccines are the most powerful tool we have in our efforts to end this long pandemic."