

# U.S. Sen. Johnson: Milwaukee VAMC data shows the ineffectiveness of Biden vaccine mandate

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**WASHINGTON** – On Monday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) sent a letter to Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Denis McDonough highlighting first-hand accounts from VA employees who fear the Biden administration’s coercive COVID-19 vaccine mandates will exacerbate VA workforce shortages and potentially limit care for veterans.

“On May 27, 2022, I met with a group of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees regarding their concerns with the quality of care received by veterans. These health care professionals described the significant workforce shortages at the VA facilities in Wisconsin and Michigan and that the vaccine mandate is only exacerbating these shortages. The VA owes the public and our veterans answers about the steps the Department is taking to address the workforce issues and to provide the highest quality care to the finest among us,” **the senator wrote.**

Sen. Johnson enclosed five testimonials from Wisconsin and Michigan VA employees for Secretary McDonough to review.

The senator also presented whistleblower data he recently obtained demonstrating the ineffectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines’ ability to prevent infection. “Based on whistleblower data from the Milwaukee VAMC facility dashboard census count between October 22, 2021 and March 8, 2022, for 31 of the 54 days I received daily reports, at least 80 percent of VA employees who tested positive for COVID-19 were vaccinated. For 8 of those 54 days, 100 percent of VA employees who tested

positive for COVID-19 were vaccinated,” **the senator wrote.**

“The continuation of care for our veterans should be our top priority, not politically motivated policies like vaccine mandates,” **the senator concluded.**

The letter, testimonials and data can be found [here](#), and the full text of the letter is below.

June 13, 2022

The Honorable Denis R. McDonough

Secretary

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Dear Secretary McDonough:

On May 27, 2022, I met with a group of Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees regarding their concerns with the quality of care received by veterans. These health care professionals described the significant workforce shortages at the VA facilities in Wisconsin and Michigan and that the vaccine mandate is only exacerbating these shortages. The VA owes the public and our veterans answers about the steps the Department is taking to address the workforce issues and to provide the highest quality care to the finest among us.

On July 26, 2021, you announced that COVID-19 vaccines would be mandatory for

VA employees.[\[1\]](#) You stated that the “VA is taking this necessary step to keep the Veterans it serves safe.”[\[2\]](#) You continued, “[w]henever a Veteran or VA employee sets foot in a VA facility, they deserve to know that we have done everything in our power to protect them from COVID-19. With this mandate, we can once again make—and keep—that fundamental promise.”[\[3\]](#)

However, after speaking with VA health care personnel, it does not appear that the vaccine mandate is protecting veterans or VA employees from COVID-19. These dedicated professionals described how they cared for our veterans during the entirety of the pandemic when proper safety equipment was not available. The VA employees shared how the VA has now deemed their workplaces “high risk” and require vaccination in order to carry out their jobs. One nurse stated, “[w]hen [personal protective equipment] was sparse, when COVID surges hit our facility multiple times, there was no concern for my vaccination status.” The nurse also stated it is “abundantly clear that the vaccine is being used to fit an agenda, not safety.” Most importantly, these health care professionals shared their concern that the Biden administration cares more about mandating vaccines for VA employees regardless of whether it comes at the cost of those employees’ jobs or potentially limiting care for veterans. In order for you to understand the impact of the policies you have implemented, I hope you will take the time to read the enclosed testimonials of VA health care professionals from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Iron Mountain, Michigan.

In addition to these testimonials, enclosed data from the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee (Milwaukee VAMC) reveals the failure of the vaccine mandate to protect VA employees and veterans from COVID-19. Based on whistleblower data from the Milwaukee VAMC facility dashboard census count between October 22, 2021 and March 8, 2022, for 31 of the 54 days I received daily reports, at least 80 percent of VA employees who tested positive for COVID-19 were vaccinated.[\[4\]](#) For 8 of those 54 days, 100 percent of VA employees who tested positive for COVID-19 were vaccinated.[\[5\]](#)

Although this data is only from one Wisconsin VA facility, it demonstrates the futility

of a vaccine mandate. The COVID-19 vaccines do not prevent transmission and therefore, a vaccine mandate is pointless. However, the Biden administration refuses to reevaluate the costs and benefits, or the unintended consequences of vaccine mandates. An analysis recently published in the *BMJ Global Health* journal found that “mandatory COVID-19 vaccine policies have had damaging effects on public trust, vaccine confidence, political polarization, human rights, inequities and social wellbeing.”[\[6\]](#) The authors of that analysis added, “[w]e question the effectiveness and consequences of coercive vaccination policy in pandemic response and urge the research community and policymakers to return to non-discriminatory, trust-based public health approaches.”[\[7\]](#)

The VA employees I met with are concerned that the Biden administration’s rigid position on the vaccine mandate will harm the veterans they care for. The VA already faced significant workforce issues prior to the mandate.[\[8\]](#) With the mandate in place, as many as 11 percent of the VA workforce may be at risk of disciplinary action, reassignment or losing their jobs.[\[9\]](#)

The continuation of care for our veterans should be our top priority, not politically motivated policies like vaccine mandates. In an effort to provide transparency to the American people regarding the VA’s vaccine mandate, please provide the following information:

1. The total number of unvaccinated VA employees as of June 13, 2022.
2. The total number of VA employees reassigned due to the mandate.
3. The total number of VA employees separated due to the mandate.

4. The total number of VA employees who received disciplinary action due to the mandate.
  
5. An analysis by occupation at the VA for each unvaccinated worker.
  
6. If it is true that 11 percent of the VA workforce is unvaccinated, how will the VA maintain care for veterans if those individuals are reassigned or fired?
  
7. What is the purpose of requiring COVID-19 vaccination if it does not prevent infection and spread?
  
8. A monthly breakdown of COVID-19 cases, hospitalization and death by vaccination status for VA employees and veterans receiving care at the VA from March 2020 to present.

Please provide this information as soon as possible but no later than June 27, 2022. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.