

UW Health: Announces requirement that providers and staff receive COVID-19 booster dose

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MADISON, Wis. – UW Health providers, staff, students and volunteers will now be required to receive a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose.

UW Health announced a vaccine requirement in 2021 and saw a very positive response from staff with only a handful choosing not to comply with the policy and about 96% are now vaccinated. The health system looks forward to a similarly strong response to the new booster requirement by May 2.

Recent data showed that boosters significantly reduce the likelihood of hospitalization or death from COVID-19. And, as original vaccination efficacy has been shown to wane over time, boosters are given to “remind” your immune system to fight the illness.

This is a prudent, logical step, according to Dr. Jeff Pothof, chief quality officer, UW Health.

“Our staff have been incredibly supportive of vaccination efforts in our system, our community and our state,” he said. “They see first-hand how important it is to get a booster as we deal with the omicron surge.”

All those subject to the requirement and eligible for the booster must receive one by May 2 or be subject to actions up to and including termination of employment. To be eligible for a booster, it must have been five months since the last Pfizer or Moderna vaccine dose, or two months since a dose of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine.

People 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 COVID-19 pandemic has been unpredictable and keeping our health care workforce safe and able to work is critical for patient care and operations, Pothof said.

“After more than two years of this ever-changing pandemic, we know the importance of getting vaccinated and getting boosted,” he said.

A recorded interview with Pothof is also available.