

# Real-world data at UT Southwestern shows benefit of early vaccination on health care workforce

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Vaccinating frontline employees at UT Southwestern led to a marked reduction in new COVID-19 infections, isolations, and quarantines. Credit: UT Southwestern Medical Center

Vaccinating health care workers resulted in an immediate and notable reduction of positive COVID-19 cases among employees, reducing the number of required isolations and quarantines by more than 90 percent, according to data at UT Southwestern Medical Center published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Health care workers were among the first groups to be eligible for vaccination.

"Real-world experience with SARS-CoV-2 vaccination at UT Southwestern demonstrated a marked reduction in the incidence of infections among our employees, preserving the workforce when it was most needed," notes Daniel K. Podolsky, M.D., president of UT Southwestern and senior author.

During the first 31 days of vaccinations becoming available, UT Southwestern provided a first dose to 59 percent of roughly 23,000 employees, while 30 percent were able to be fully vaccinated in that time frame. Among the findings:

1.5 percent became infected. Infection rates were highest—2.6 percent—among nonvaccinated employees. Infection rates were lowest—.05 percent—among those fully vaccinated.

"Our ability to quickly vaccinate a majority of our workforce in the midst of what became the largest surge to date in the region made a critical difference in ensuring we were able to continue providing top-flight care while [health systems](#) were strained," says John Warner, M.D., executive vice president for health system affairs at UT Southwestern.

Researchers also saw advantages among partially vaccinated individuals, and from Jan. 9, the actual number of positive tests among all UT Southwestern employees was consistently lower than the number

projected.

The data also show continued need to address [vaccine](#) hesitancy, with UT Southwestern now approaching 70 percent immunization among its workforce.

"In light of this real-world experience clearly demonstrating the effectiveness of immunization, further understanding of the reticence of some individuals to take advantage of vaccination bears even greater importance," says first author William Daniel, M.D., vice president and chief quality officer at UT Southwestern.

UT Southwestern has provided educational outreach to [community groups](#) and businesses, developed extensive online resources including Q&As and blogs, and is preparing to launch a multilingual public service announcement campaign to help educate diverse communities about vaccination and address issues of hesitancy.

"It is important to reach out across multiple platforms to effectively address people's questions so that we can continue to make progress on vaccine hesitancy," says Marc Nivet, Ed.D., executive vice president for institutional advancement at UT Southwestern.

**More information:** William Daniel et al. Early Evidence of the Effect of SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine at One Medical Center, *New England Journal of Medicine* (2021). [DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2102153](https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMc2102153)

Provided by UT Southwestern Medical Center

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