

Major medical groups call for mandatory COVID vaccination for health workers

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All health care workers should be required to be vaccinated against

COVID-19, dozens of major U.S. medical groups said in a joint statement released Monday.

"Due to the recent COVID-19 surge and the availability of safe and effective vaccines, our [health care organizations](#) and societies advocate that all [health care](#) and long-term care employers require their workers to receive the COVID-19 vaccine," the [statement](#) said.

"This is the logical fulfillment of the ethical commitment of all [health care workers](#) to put patients, as well as residents of long-term care facilities, first and take all steps necessary to ensure their [health](#) and well-being," it said.

The groups include the American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Academy of Family Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Academy of Nursing, American Pharmacists Association, and many more. They pointed out that COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths are once again rising nationwide due to significant numbers of unvaccinated people and the rapid spread of the highly contagious Delta variant.

"Vaccination is the primary way to put the pandemic behind us and avoid the return of stringent public health measures. Unfortunately, many health care and long-term care personnel remain unvaccinated," the statement added. "As we move towards full FDA approval of the currently available vaccines, all health care workers should get vaccinated for their own health, and to protect their colleagues, families, residents of long-term care facilities and patients."

The American Nurses Association also signed the statement.

"The scientific rigor to swiftly develop effective COVID-19 vaccines and the monumental efforts to ensure all Americans get vaccinated is

nothing short of amazing. Vaccination is both a significant public health victory and a scientifically proven strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent the loss of more American lives," American Nurses Association President Ernest Grant said in a separate statement.

"As the largest group of health care professionals, nurses are critical to all facets of COVID-19 response efforts and must strive to remain physically and psychologically safe to function optimally to care for themselves, their patients and their communities. Nurses must get vaccinated," Grant said.

Dr. Susan Bailey is immediate past president of the American Medical Association. "It is critical that all people in the health care workforce get vaccinated against COVID-19 for the safety of our patients and our colleagues," she said. "Increased vaccinations among health care personnel will not only reduce the spread of COVID-19 but also reduce the harmful toll this virus is taking within the health care workforce and those we are striving to serve."

Mandatory vaccination of health care workers is especially crucial to protect [vulnerable people](#), including unvaccinated children and those with weakened immune systems, the groups said.

"Indeed, this is why many health care and long term care organizations already require vaccinations for influenza, hepatitis B, and pertussis," the groups noted. "While we recognize some workers cannot be vaccinated because of identified medical reasons and should be exempted from a mandate, they constitute a small minority of all workers."

While COVID-19 vaccine mandates have proven effective, some health care workers may mistrust health care institutions, the group statement acknowledged.

"We must continue to address workers' concerns, engage with marginalized populations, and work with trusted messengers to improve [vaccine](#) acceptance," the groups urged.

"As the health care community leads the way in requiring vaccines for our employees, we hope all other employers across the country will follow our lead and implement effective policies to encourage vaccination," the statement said. "The health and safety of U.S. workers, families, communities and the nation depends on it."

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on [health care workers and COVID-19 vaccines](#).

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