

Mandatory COVID Vaccine for Healthcare Workers

Articles, COVID 19: Answers to Business Challenges, News November 12, 2021

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued an interim final rule requiring COVID-19 vaccinations for workers in most institutional care settings. A copy of the CMS press release can be found at <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/biden-harris-administration-issues-emergency-regulation-requiring-covid-19-vaccination-health-care>.

This rule applies to those facilities subject to CMS regulations. Several facilities are regulated by the CMS, but this does not include private practices. A full list of these facilities can be found at the CMS published FAQ found at <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/cms-omnibus-staff-vax-requirements-2021.pdf>.

Under the rule, all eligible staff of CMS regulated facilities must receive the first dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine or requested and/or been granted a lawful exemption by December 5, 2021. Also, all eligible workers must be fully vaccinated by January 4, 2022.

The CMS Rule also requires all facilities to have appropriate policies and procedures developed and implemented by December 5, 2021. Some policies noted in the rule include a policy for ensuring staff are vaccinated by the applicable deadlines; a policy for requesting accommodations, where exemptions from the vaccination requirements are sought; and a policy for ensuring additional precautions to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 for staff who are not fully vaccinated, just to name some. Therefore, it is important that facilities understand what policies they need to implement in order to not miss this important December 5 policy deadline.

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