

MEMORANDUM

TO: ECU Faculty and Staff

FROM: Philip Rogers, Chancellor

DATE: September 1, 2021

SUBJ: Vaccine Mandate in Clinical Settings

The purpose of this message is to announce a COVID-19 vaccination mandate for some (not all) ECU employees. The COVID-19 vaccine will be required for all University faculty/employees who:

1. May engage in direct patient care as a clinician,
2. Direct patient care with students or site visits for students working with preceptors,
or
3. Enter health care agencies that are under a COVID-19 vaccine mandate to collect data for research projects or other scholarly activities for their own research or to oversee student research and scholarly activity.

Employees under this mandate must be fully vaccinated or receive a medical or religious exception by Dec. 1, 2021. Fully vaccinated status is the completion of a two-dose series of mRNA vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) or a single dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine. On Aug. 23, 2021, the [FDA approved the Pfizer vaccine](#) for individuals 16 years of age and older. This mandate aligns with other state and nonstate health care agencies which care for patients, including UNC Health and Vidant Health. With the ongoing surge of COVID-19 cases and dramatic rises in hospitalization this is a necessary step for the safety of patients, research participants and our employees. According to a recent report from Vidant Health, over 90% of patients hospitalized due to COVID-19 are unvaccinated.

As a result, ECU's clinical leaders believe it is critical that employees in the health care environment and those providing direct patient care be vaccinated against COVID-19 regardless of the ownership or location of the clinic in which they work, and I concur with their assessment. **Affected employees will be notified no later than Sept. 10, 2021.**

Employees seeking medical or religious exemptions must submit those forms by Nov. 1, 2021. See below for links to those forms.

The UNC System has the legal authority to issue vaccine mandates for its employees and this authority for health care settings has been delegated to the Chancellors. The NC Department of Labor and the EEOC have advised that public employers may require employees to get the COVID-19 vaccination, subject only to medical and religious exceptions as required under the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ("Title VII").

* Employees seeking a medical exception may address that to ECU's Office of Prospective Health and you will find the process outlined [here](#).

* Employees seeking a religious exception may address that to ECU's Office of Equity and Diversity and you will find that process outlined [here](#).

* In the absence of an exception, all employees must provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination and the process for submitting that proof is outlined [here](#).

Please be assured that the confidentiality of exemption requests and employee vaccine information will be strictly maintained in accordance with applicable law. The Office of Prospective Health and other University officials will consult with the Office of University Counsel as needed to ensure compliance with all applicable law, including specifically, the ADA and Title VII and their implementing regulations.