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August 16, 2021 | 2:00 pm

Stay up to date on COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

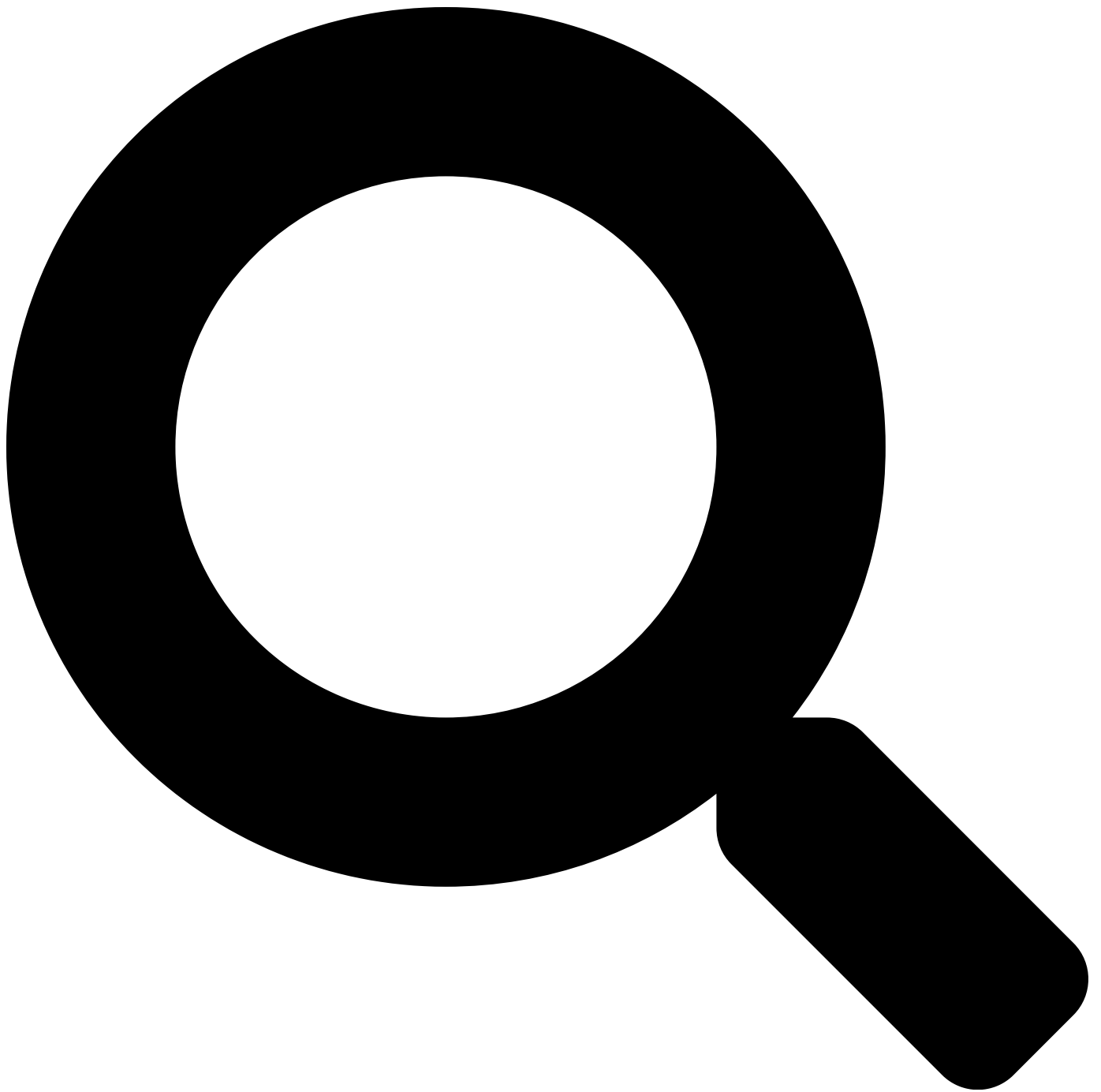
My top priority as Governor is keeping the people of our state safe. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has been hard at work to detect and contain COVID-19 and has been partnering with federal and local health departments.

For the latest information [click here](#).

Are you eligible to get the COVID-19 vaccine? [Click here to find information on registering to get the vaccine](#).

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 [Colorado Governor Jared Polis logo](#) 

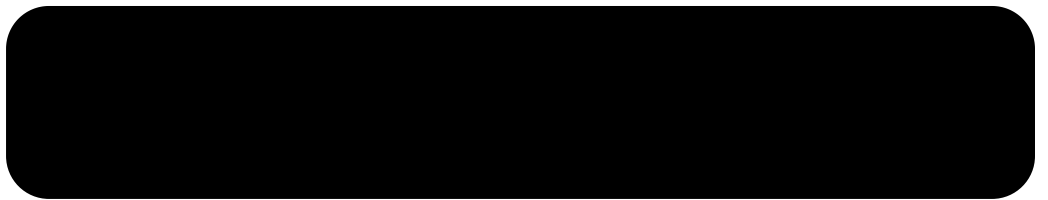
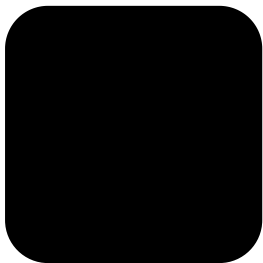
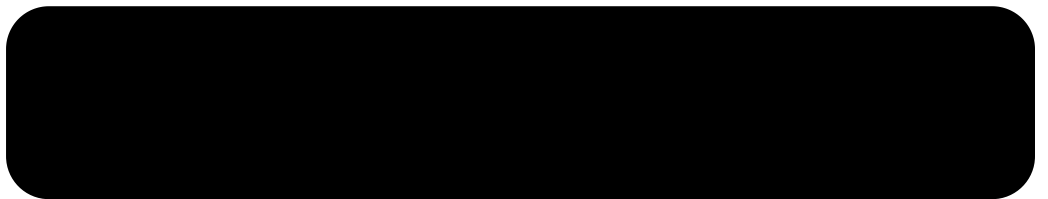
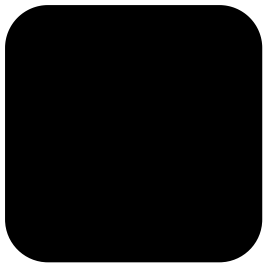
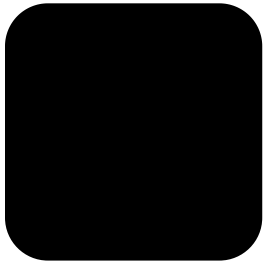
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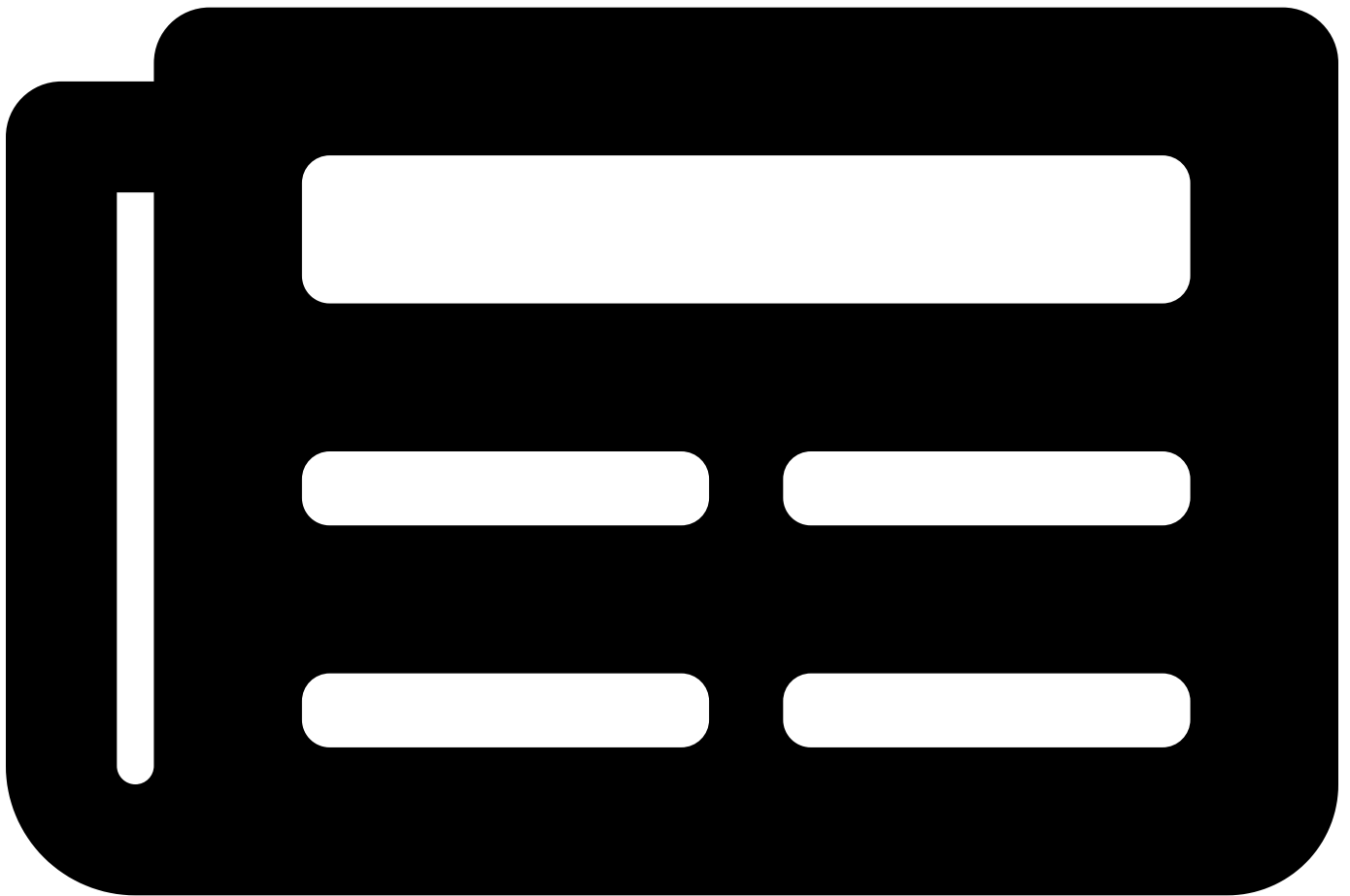
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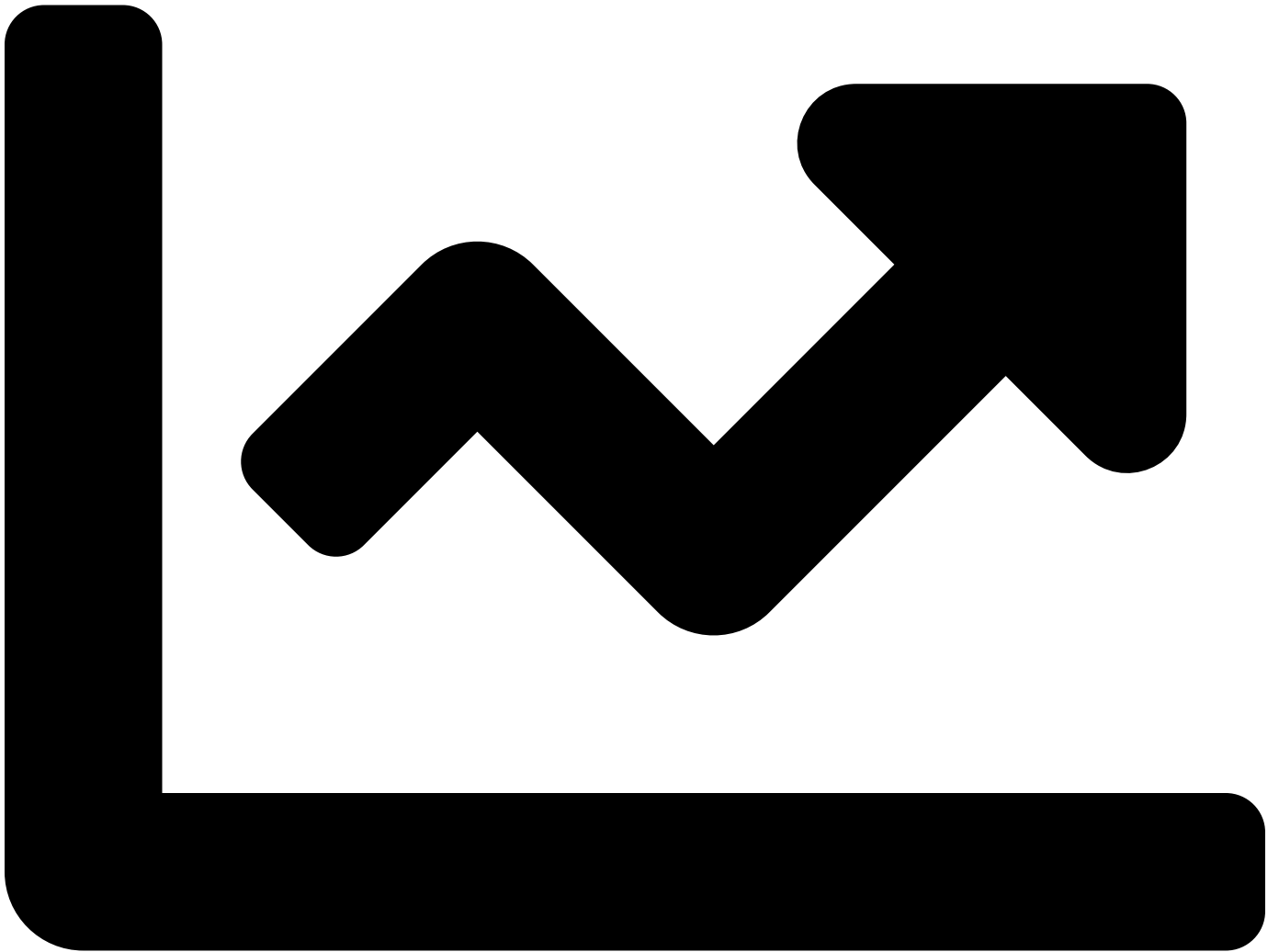
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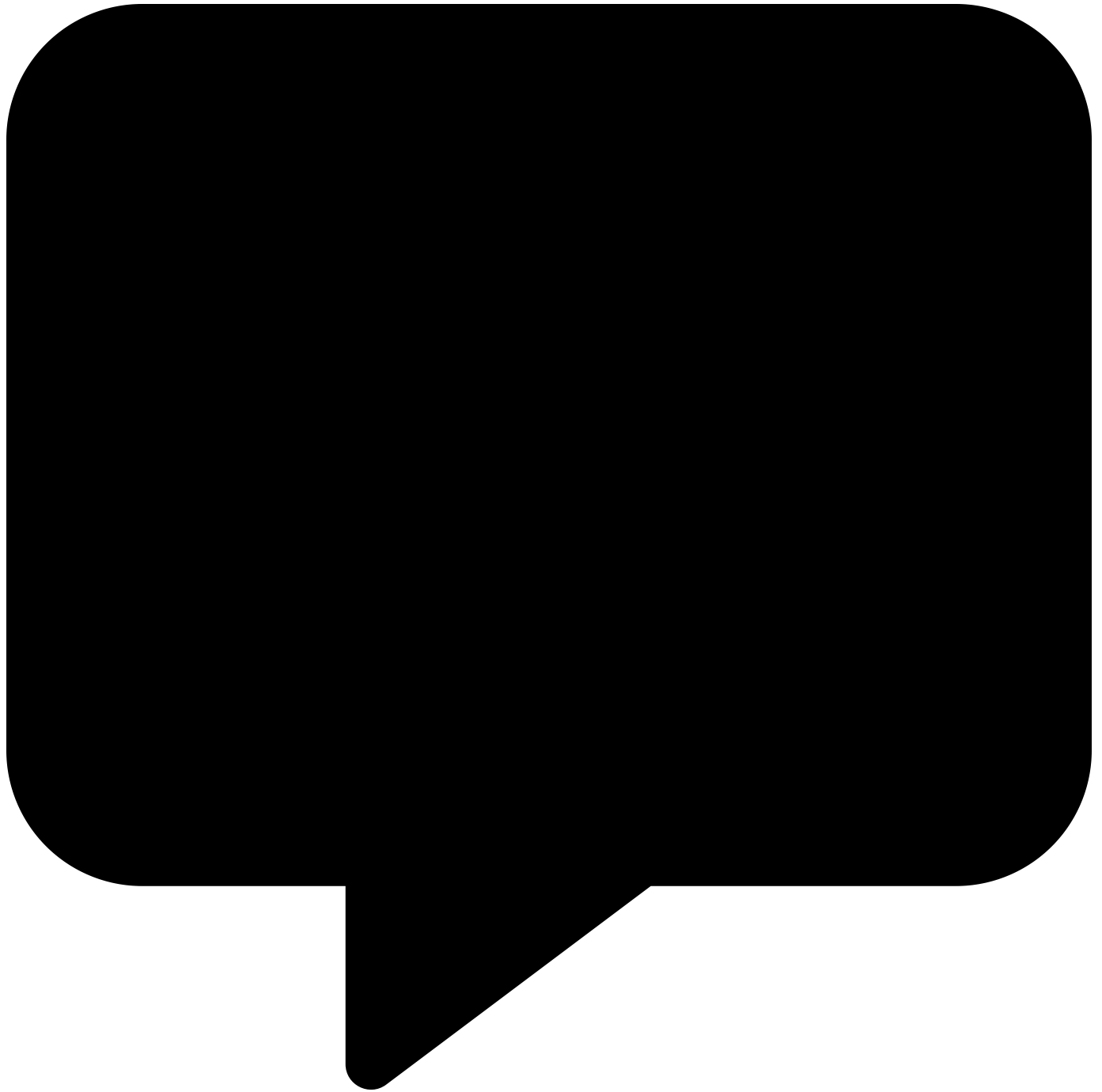
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Governor Polis Urges State Board of Health to Engage in Expedited Rulemaking to Require COVID-19 Vaccine for All Personnel Working Directly with Colorado's Vulnerable Populations & Settings Where Coloradans Receive Essential Medical Care

Tuesday, August 17, 2021

DENVER - Today, Governor Polis urged the State Board of Health to quickly engage in a rulemaking to require the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine for personnel staffing vulnerable populations and places where people receive essential medical care.

“After much consideration and conversations with both senior living industry leaders, patient advocates, and leaders in healthcare, I am writing today to ask that you engage in expedited rulemaking to require the vaccine for all personnel working directly with our vulnerable populations, personnel working in facilities with medically vulnerable populations, and personnel in the settings where people receive essential medical care,” the Governor writes.

This continues to be a pandemic of the unvaccinated. Data shows that unvaccinated Americans are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and spreading it to others within their community.

“This is a grave situation as we find ourselves staring down the far more contagious delta variant and knowing that the estimated 30-40% of unvaccinated staff provides too many opportunities for this virus to enter into these facilities. I also know that we all share concerns about this workforce. This workforce has been through so much over the last 18 months. They are tired and burnt out and we were experiencing high turn over and staff shortages even before the pandemic arrived on our shores. In order to minimize disruption to the workforce you must take a comprehensive approach to this rulemaking to ensure that if one facility has a vaccine requirement the staff does not leave to go to a facility down the road without a vaccine requirement,” the Governor’s letter continues.

Colorado is faring better than our neighbors but like the rest of the country, is seeing a rise in COVID-19 cases, largely due to the highly contagious delta variant. Individuals who have not received the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine are unprotected from the delta variant which can lead to preventable hospitalizations and deaths.

“In Colorado, many major hospitals have already taken this step, including UHealth, Banner Health, Denver Health, Children’s Hospital Colorado, SCL Health, Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center, National Jewish, Boulder Community Hospital and Kaiser Permanente. Several senior living facilities such as Genesis and Vivage have also instituted a vaccine requirement. These leaders have shared with me their personal struggle to make this decision, concerns about their workforce and potential impacts on their patients. In our conversations, these leaders have shared that while they know they made the right decision and are willing to do their part, this is hard and could exacerbate workforce stress and shortages. Therefore, they urged me and for the state to act on a more comprehensive approach to the entire healthcare and caretaker workforce in order to prevent more disruption to the workforce’s needs. As an employer, we practice what we preach and the State of Colorado will announce today that we will be requiring all personnel working in our 24/7 facilities receive their first dose by September 30th as a condition of employment,” the Governor’s [letter](#) continues.

Earlier this month, Governor Polis and the administration [announced](#) that unvaccinated state workers must begin serial testing and continue mask-wearing indoors in public spaces.

“With over 160 million Americans safely vaccinated, the COVID vaccine has proven to be both safe and effective. Already, many healthcare professional organizations have called for healthcare workers to be vaccinated to protect the health and well-being of patients. These decisions are being made to protect the lives of patients, providers and their families and to stop the spread of the disease. The key is to increase vaccinations... and do it now,” said Bob Murphy, State Director for AARP Colorado.

When UHealth announced its vaccination requirement for everyone who works inside its hospitals and clinics, large numbers of employees and patients expressed their appreciation for the added safety measure.

“It is clear that the COVID-19 vaccines are both extremely safe and effective at protecting people from COVID-19. As a health care provider, UHealth’s priority and responsibility is to provide the safest possible environment for our patients and everyone who works in our facilities, and this is why we are proud to be joining

the hundreds of other hospitals across the nation in requiring all staff members and providers to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or to receive an exemption for valid medical or religious reasons,” said Dr. Michelle Barron, senior medical director of infection prevention for UCHHealth and professor of medicine at the CU School of Medicine. “These vaccines are helping us save lives and improve safety for Colorado residents.”

“Due to the recent COVID-19 surge and highly contagious variants, SCL Health supports the efforts of Governor Polis and the request to mandate COVID-19 vaccinations for all healthcare workers with the opportunity for exemptions from the mandate for identified medical or religious reasons. This is the logical fulfillment and ethical commitment to put patients first and take all steps necessary to ensure their health and well-being,” said Dr. J.P. Valin, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for SCL Health.

“SCL Health has implemented specific policies and effective dates for its mandated vaccination policy. Other healthcare systems have done the same. We are all in alignment that vaccination is the primary way to put the pandemic behind us and avoid the return of stringent public health measures. The Governor’s request to mandate vaccines for all healthcare workers is essential to protect the vulnerable, including unvaccinated children and the immunocompromised. Indeed, this is why many health care organizations already require vaccinations for influenza, hepatitis B, and pertussis. It’s also why many businesses around the country now need COVID-19 vaccination,” Dr. J.P. Valin, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer for SCL Health added.

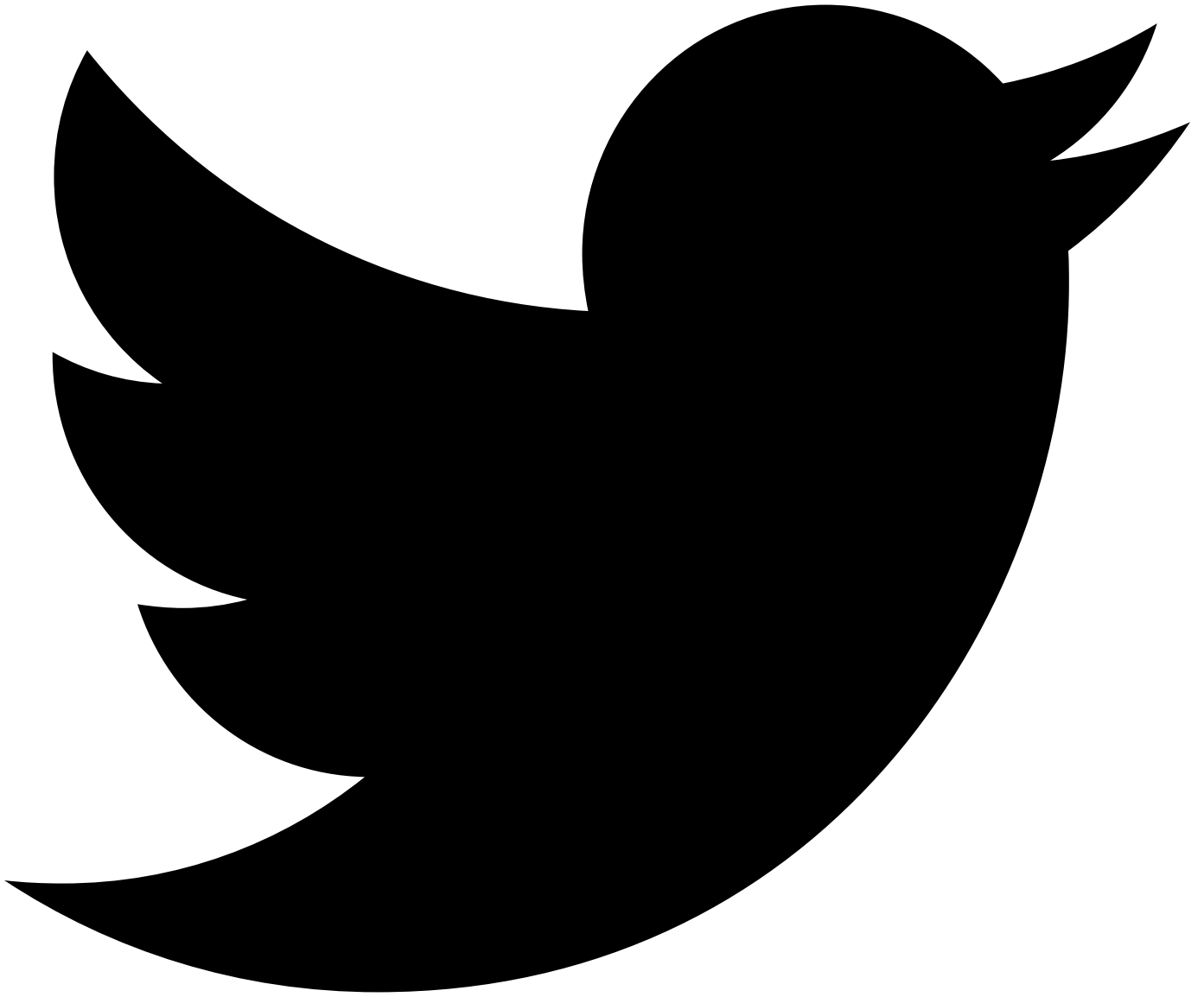
“Denver Health stands with the growing number of experts and institutions that support the requirement for universal vaccination of healthcare and other essential workers. We are proud to be part of a State that is leading the way in requiring vaccine in these critical settings. The health and safety of our community, including unvaccinated children and vulnerable adults, depends on it,” said Connie Savor Price, MD, Chief Medical Officer for Denver Health.

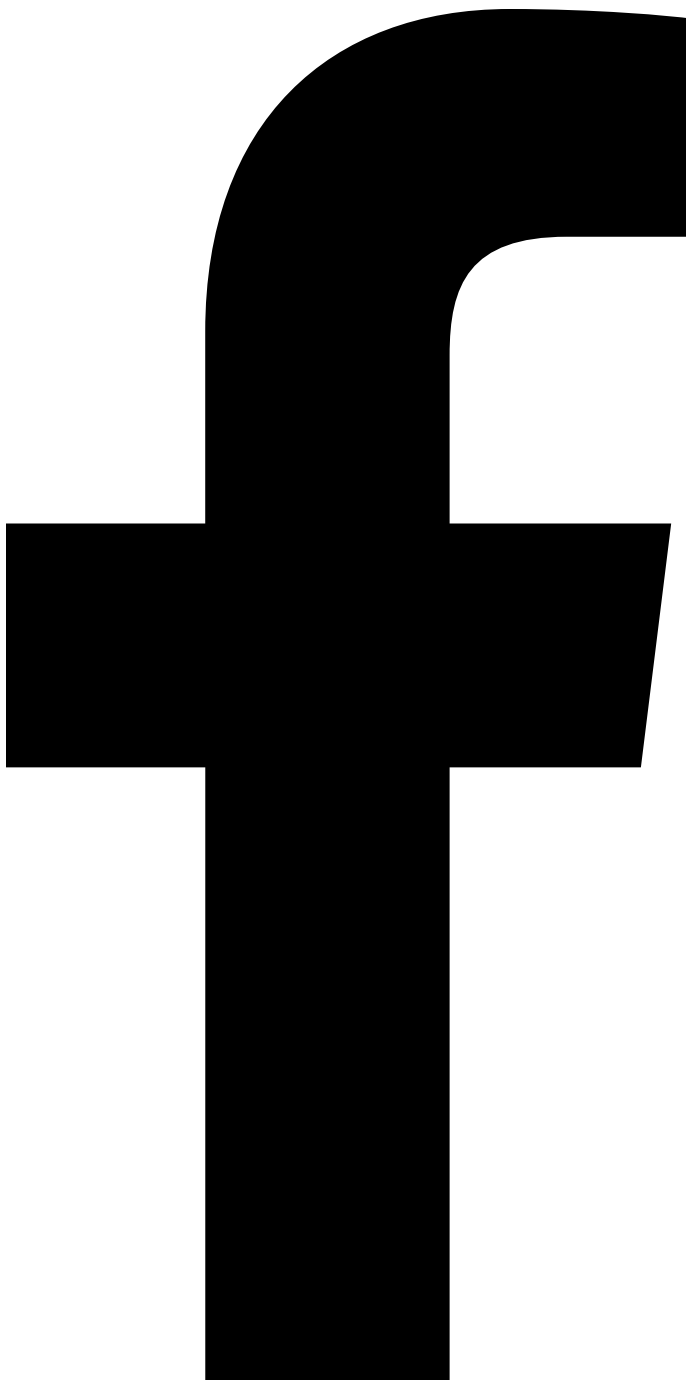
For more information on where to get the vaccine, please visit covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine

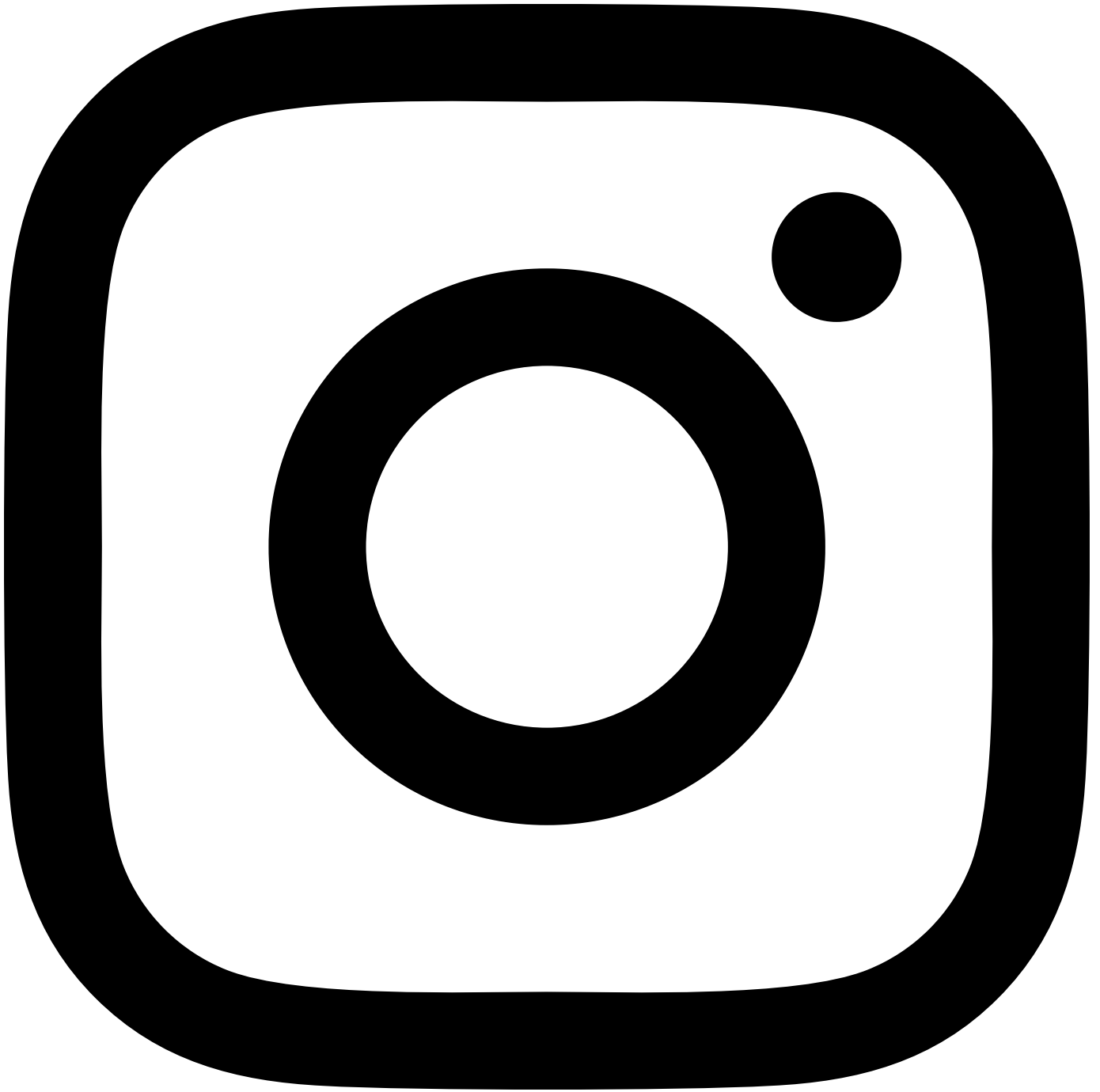
Contact Governor Polis

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Constituent Services Help Line: (303) 866-2885
Governor's Office, Front Desk: (303) 866-2471

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