

August 16, 2021 | 12:20 pm

COVID-19 Updates

Unvaccinated individuals are at greater risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines.

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GOVERNOR
ANDREW M. CUOMO

AUGUST 16, 2021 | Albany, NY

Governor Cuomo Announces COVID-19 Vaccination Mandate for Healthcare Workers

COVID-19 VACCINE

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Department of Health Issues Section 16 Orders to Hospitals and Long-Term Care Facilities Requiring Policy to Ensure All Employees Are Vaccinated

First Dose Required by September 27

Department of Health Authorizes Third Dose for Immunocompromised New Yorkers

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced today that all healthcare workers in New York State, including staff at hospitals and long-term care facilities (LTCF), including nursing homes, adult care, and other congregate care settings, will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by Monday, September 27. The State Department of Health will issue Section 16 Orders requiring all hospital, LTCF, and nursing homes to develop and implement a policy mandating employee vaccinations, with limited exceptions for those with religious or medical reasons. To date, 75% of the state's ~450,000 hospital workers, 74% of the state's ~30,000 adult care facility workers, and 68% of the state's ~145,500 nursing home workers have completed their vaccine series. Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul's administration was briefed prior to the announcement.

"When COVID ambushed New York last year, New Yorkers acted, while the Federal Government denied the problem," **Governor Cuomo said.** "Now, the Delta variant is spreading across the nation and across New York -- [new daily positives are up over 1000% over the last six weeks](http://web.archive.org/web/20210816215331/https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2021-08/Presentation1.pdf) (<http://web.archive.org/web/20210816215331/https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2021-08/Presentation1.pdf>), and over 80 percent of recent positives in New York State are linked to the Delta variant. We must now act again to stop the spread. Our healthcare heroes led the battle against the virus, and now we need them to lead the battle between the variant and the vaccine. We have always followed the science, and we're doing so again today, with

these recommendations by Dr. Zucker and federal and state health experts. But we need to do more. I have strongly urged private businesses to implement vaccinated-only admission policies, and school districts to mandate vaccinations for teachers. Neither will occur without the state legally mandating the actions -- private businesses will not enforce a vaccine mandate unless it's the law, and local school districts will be hesitant to make these challenging decisions without legal direction."

Governor Cuomo also announced that the Department of Health has authorized a third COVID-19 vaccine dose for New Yorkers with compromised immune systems, following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation last week. Eligible New Yorkers can receive their third dose 28 days after the completion of their two-dose vaccine series, effective immediately.

The CDC is currently recommending that moderately to severely immunocompromised people receive an additional dose, including people who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood;
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medications to suppress the immune system;
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system;
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome);
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection;
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids, cancer chemotherapy that causes severe immunosuppression, or other medications that may suppress your immune response.

New Yorkers should contact their healthcare provider about whether getting an additional dose is appropriate for them at this time.

New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said, "While we have made tremendous progress in getting New Yorkers vaccinated, this pandemic is far from over and more must be done. The data and science tell us that getting more people vaccinated as quickly as possible is the best way to keep people safe, prevent further mutations, and enable us to resume our daily routines. This mandate will both help close the vaccination gap and reduce the spread of the Delta variant. I want to thank all New York State's healthcare workers for stepping up once again and showing our state that getting vaccinated is safe, easy, and most importantly, effective."

These steps follow Governor Cuomo's August 2 announcement that MTA and Port Authority employees working in New York facilities will be required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 by Labor Day, and his July 28 announcement that state employees and patient-facing employees in state-run hospitals will be required to get vaccinated for COVID-19 by Labor Day. State employees who choose to remain unvaccinated will be required to undergo weekly COVID testing.

Contact the Governor's Press Office

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