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# News Release

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## VA expands mandate for COVID-19 vaccines among VHA employees

**WASHINGTON** — Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough will expand his previous COVID-19 vaccine mandate Friday, Aug. 13, to apply to most Veterans Health Administration employees and volunteers and contractors who work in VHA facilities, visit VHA facilities or otherwise come into contact with VA patients and healthcare workers as part of their duties.

Under the expanded mandate, employees who will need to be vaccinated include Hybrid Title 38 and Title 5 VA health care personnel — such as psychologists, pharmacists, social workers, nursing assistants, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, peer specialists, medical support assistants, engineers, housekeepers and other clinical, administrative and infrastructure support employees who come into contact with VA patients and healthcare workers.

“We’re now including most VHA employees and volunteers and contractors in the vaccine mandate because it remains the best way to keep Veterans safe, especially as the Delta variant spreads across the country,” Secretary McDonough said. “This pandemic is not over and VA must do everything in our power to protect Veterans from COVID-19. With this expanded mandate, we can once again make — and keep — that fundamental promise.”

The department’s decision is supported by numerous medical organizations, including the [American Hospital Association](#), [America’s Essential Hospitals](#) and a [Multisociety group of the leading Infectious Disease Societies](#). The American Medical Association, American Nurses Association, American College of Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, Association of American Medical Colleges, and National Association for Home Care and Hospice also [endorsed mandating COVID-19 vaccination for health care workers](#).

As with the previous mandate, directive affected employees will have eight weeks to provide proof of vaccination to their local VHA Occupational Health Office.

All VA employees are eligible to be vaccinated at no personal expense at any of our [facilities](#) and would also receive four hours of paid administrative leave after demonstrating they have been vaccinated.

To learn more about the vaccine, its safety and effectiveness visit the [VA COVID-19 information page](#).

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