

Extended COVID-19 Policy Update

The Illinois Vaccine Mandate and GBC's Updated Vaccine Policy

As COVID-19 infection and hospitalization rates across the state continue to increase, Governor JB Pritzker and IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike announced vaccination requirements for individuals in high-risk settings. All healthcare workers, all pre-k-12 teachers, and staff, and all higher education personnel and students will now be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Employees in all these settings and higher education students who are unable or unwilling to receive the vaccine will be required to get tested for COVID-19 at least once per week. You can read additional information regarding the Illinois vaccine mandate [here](#).

These requirements are designed to better protect the more vulnerable populations, including young children who do not yet qualify for vaccines. Children with any kind of underlying condition are more at risk of getting more severe COVID disease if they get infected. 98% of Illinois' COVID-19 infections from January to July were among the unvaccinated.

Since we are healthcare professionals and have been using the healthcare guidelines throughout this pandemic, we are going to implement the following vaccine policy. As a healthcare employee at GBC, if you are not vaccinated, you will have the choice of either getting vaccinated or facing regular testing requirements.

Those who choose not to receive the vaccine, opt out for medical reasons, or a religious exemption must submit a weekly negative test to Human Resources at humanresources@gbcautismservices.com.

- **If you're not vaccinated, you need to submit your first negative test result to Human Resources by 9/19**
- Each subsequent test results would need to be submitted within the next 7 days of when the test was conducted.

- Example: If you were tested on 9/16 and received and submitted your results to Human Resources on 9/17 then your next test would need to be taken by 9/23 and results would need to be submitted by 9/24.
- If you miss a weekly test submission, your appointments will be cancelled.
- A list of COVID testing locations is available [here](#). Please note that it will likely take a few days to receive your test results, and we encourage all staff who are subject to weekly testing to plan ahead so they are able to resume without a gap in appointments. There will likely be a high demand for tests across the state, and supply may be limited and testing appointments may be hard to get. Please plan in advance so that you can provide continuity of care to your patients.

Alternatively, your other option would be to get vaccinated. If you are vaccinated, you will not need to submit weekly negative COVID test results. If you choose to get vaccinated, please submit your vaccine card after your first dose to be exempt from weekly testing. Second doses of the vaccine must be received by 30 days after the first dose, and your vaccine card should be submitted again after your second dose. If you are interested in getting the vaccine, you can search for a location [here](#).

Please note, if you are fully vaccinated and we do not yet have a vaccine card on file for you, please send a copy of your vaccination card to Human Resources as soon as possible.

Other COVID Updates Announced this Week

FDA Approves First COVID-19 Vaccine

The Pfizer vaccine is the first COVID-19 vaccine to be approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccines

are still approved under the Emergency Use Authorization. The full press release is available [here](#).

Illinois Mask Requirement

To slow the spread of the highly transmissible COVID-19 Delta variant, all Illinois residents over the age of two will be required to wear a mask in all indoor settings, effective Monday, August 30th. The requirement is applicable to both vaccinated and unvaccinated residents statewide.

COVID-19 Vaccines for Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised People

The CDC recommends that people with moderately to severely compromised immune systems receive an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at least 28 days after a second dose of [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) or [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#). This includes people with a range of conditions, such as recipients of organ or stem cell transplants, people with advanced or untreated HIV infection, active recipients of treatment for cancer, people who are taking some medications that weaken the immune system, and others. A full list of conditions can be found [here](#).