

COVID-19

Guidance Date 10/01/2021

QHS STAFF REQUIRED COVID VACCINATION GUIDANCE AND FAQ

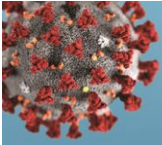
Background: Hawaii, like most other states, is suffering a marked increase in new cases of COVID. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that 99.5% of deaths due to COVID were among unvaccinated individuals between April and June 2021. The Delta variant has changed this somewhat and now we are finding that those who are unvaccinated and hospitalized with COVID are 11.3 times more likely to die than patients who are vaccinated and hospitalized (BMJ 2021;374: n2282). Those who are unvaccinated are also at higher risk of transmitting disease to others. The CDC has indicated that vaccinated individuals are less likely to contract COVID. They are, therefore, less likely to be carriers. Current CDC data also states that vaccinated persons potentially have reduced transmissibility than unvaccinated persons, although additional studies are necessary.

As a leading health care provider in the state of Hawaii, Queen's is committed to protecting the health and safety of our patients, employees, and visitors. One of the best ways to achieve this is to ensure that all of our employees are vaccinated. Required vaccinations among health care providers is a best practice supported by the President of the United States, the American Medical Association, American Nurses Association, Infectious Disease Societies, American Hospital Association, American College of Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, Association of American Medical Colleges, and National Association for Home Care and Hospice.

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on The Queen's Health Systems' policy on required health care personnel vaccination against COVID-19. The vaccination policy ([SW-21-103](#)) can be found on the Queen's Intranet. Both this FAQ document and the policy may be updated over time as new knowledge and best practices emerge. The content of each document is subject to change as we learn more about this pandemic and the safety measures that are most effective.

POLICY:

1. All staff and health care personnel (HCP) of The Queen's Health Systems are required to be fully-vaccinated with an FDA-Approved or FDA-Emergency Use Authorized COVID vaccine or complete the attestation and an exemption request by October 1, 2021.
2. Staff and HCP may seek a workplace accommodation using medical or religious exemptions as required by law, or may seek a personal exemption request. HCP must attest to one of the exemptions in order to be in compliance with the policy.
3. Staff and HCP who remain unvaccinated and have completed their attestation and exemption request after October 1, 2021 will be required to undergo routine COVID surveillance testing on a weekly basis in order to be cleared for their work for QHS.
4. QHS will require a self-administered nasal swab for this testing. PCR nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT) will be our standard testing platform. QHS and DLS will continue to evaluate new testing technologies and will be open to adding to our testing capabilities and offerings.
5. HCP who are unvaccinated and do not comply with the testing process will be subject to HR action up to and including termination of employment in accordance with QHS policy including,



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but not limited to, Policy [SW-21-089](#) (Self-Assessment to Fight Exposure (S.A.F.E.) – Employee Remote Monitoring Policy).

6. The policy addressing required vaccinations ([SW-21-103](#)) is available on the Intranet.

PROCEDURE:

1. The policy will take effect 10/1/21 and all QHS employees will be required to either be vaccinated or comply with attestation exemption requirements, alternate safety and preventive measures that include, but not be limited to, routine weekly COVID testing after that date.
2. Testing will be available at each hospital campus and other DLS sites via an order in CARELink.
3. If testing is available to the HCP and the HCP does not get tested, the HCP and their manager will be notified and the HCP will be taken off the schedule without pay and will have up to 72 hours from that notification to complete testing.
4. If the HCP has not completed testing within the allowed 72 hours in accordance with policy, the HCP will be immediately suspended without pay for a period of up to 2 weeks.
5. If the HCP has not completed testing within the 2 weeks in accordance with policy, termination procedures will be initiated for that HCP.
6. A third failure to timely comply with the weekly testing requirement as outlined in 3-5 above will result in termination. To protect the health and well-being of our patients, visitors and HCP, occurrences of non-compliance will result in progressive discipline up to and including termination of employment.
7. All new hires into The Queen's Health Systems will be required to demonstrate full vaccination against COVID-19 before commencing employment. New hires may receive a medical or religious exemption as required by law. However, personal exemptions to the COVID vaccine will not be an option for new hires who begin employment after 10/1/2021.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- 1. Why is Queen's requiring me to take the COVID vaccination when the vaccination doesn't prevent me from catching COVID?**

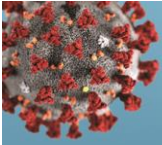
Queen's is committed to the health and well-being of our staff, patients, and community, and it is within that spirit that we are requiring our staff to be vaccinated. While the vaccine does not provide 100% protection against COVID infection, it markedly reduces the infection rate compared to those who are unvaccinated, and vaccination reduces the severity of COVID-19 illness in the event a vaccinated individual contracts COVID. Those who are unvaccinated are also at higher risk of transmitting disease to others. The CDC has indicated that vaccinated individuals are less likely to contract COVID. They are, therefore, less likely to be carriers.

- 2. Who is covered by this requirement?**

All employees and affiliated health care providers of The Queen's Health Systems (all entities) are covered.

- 3. Does this guidance apply to staff who work from home?**

Yes. All HCP, regardless of practice or work sites, are covered under this policy.



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4. Does the term “staff” cover all employees (including HNA, Teamster and Non-Bargaining employees) or only medical staff?

Yes. Staff, or HCP in the formal policy, applies to all employees and affiliated providers of The Queen's Health Systems, including those represented by a union, subject to the terms and conditions of the collective bargaining agreement.

5. What are my choices as an employee or affiliated health care provider?

Staff will have one of 2 choices:

1. Get vaccinated and show proof of vaccination to Employee Health.
2. Seek an exemption from vaccination and comply with routine weekly COVID testing.

6. How do I show proof of my vaccination status?

Show proof of your COVID vaccination to Employee Health.

EXEMPTION REQUEST:

7. How do I complete a COVID-19 Vaccination Exemption Request?

Employees are able to complete a COVID-19 Vaccination Exemption Request via [MyInfo>MyPersonal Info>COVID-19 Vaccination Exemption](#).

8. What happens if I am not fully vaccinated and I don't complete the exemption?

Employees who are not fully vaccinated and have not completed an exemption request by October 1, 2021 will be suspended without pay. We understand there will be circumstances (medical or extended leave, computer access, etc.) that may prohibit attestation by October 1. In those cases, QHS will work with the employee and their manager to rectify and resolve the situation in a respectful manner.

9. If I'm partially vaccinated or in the process of getting fully vaccinated, do I have to complete an exemption?

Yes, partially vaccinated employees are still required to complete an exemption request. You may select a personal exemption and continue with getting fully vaccinated.

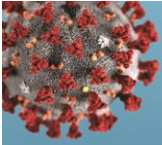
10. Do I have to do anything else besides submitting the exemption for my exemption to be approved?

Once employees have submitted an exemption, in general, no additional action or documentation will be required under the current policy.

TESTING:

11. If an employee chooses not to get vaccinated under one of the exemptions, how will they get routine surveillance?

The employee is required to participate in weekly COVID surveillance testing at one of the designated COVID testing facilities.



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12. When will testing start for those declaring exemptions?

Weekly testing for employees who are not fully vaccinated will start on October 3, 2021 for QMC-PB, QNHCH, MGH and other entities, and on October 5, 2021 for QMC-West.

13. How frequently will employees need to be tested?

Testing is required on a weekly basis. Employees are required to self-schedule to ensure they receive their test from Sunday through Saturday to be eligible to work the following Sunday through Saturday.

14. Where are the testing sites located?

Testing sites will be at the following locations:

- QMC Punchbowl Drive Thru – Daily 7:30a-3:00p
- QMC Punchbowl POB 1 Suite 709 – Mon-Fri 7:30a-7:00p; weekends 3:30p-7:00p
- QMC West CSC 150 – Tue-Sat 7:30a-4:00p (starting October 5, 2021)
- QNHCH Employee Health – Mon/Tue/Thu/Fri 8:00a-10:00a and 2:00p-3:00p; night and weekend shift testing – see House Coordinator
- MGH at Paul G. Stevens, MD, Outpatient Clinic – Mon 8:00a-8:30a, Tue 8:00a-8:30a if Monday is a holiday
- DLS Satellites and DLS Halawa

15. Do I have to test at a Queen's location?

Yes. There are certain situations when tests from State Trusted Partners are accepted. These include:

- Employees testing while traveling
- Employees working at other health care facilities
- Non-employed physicians

In these situations, proof of testing must be submitted to your appropriate Employee Health locations as required in a timely manner.

16. Do I walk-in for testing or do I have to schedule testing?

Employees working for QHS, QMC-PB, QMC-West, QDC, QEF, and PCPE will be required to self-schedule by going to the Queen's Intranet site below:

<http://eww.queens.org/ic/weeklytesting.html>

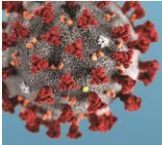
For all other locations, testing will be coordinated at your work site.

17. Are we required to test during work hours or will I get time off to do testing?

Employees are expected to test during work hours. In rare exceptions, employees will get tested during time-off.

18. When should an employee get tested?

Employees are required to test between Sunday and Saturday in order to work the following week. Employees are required to test at least 24 hours prior to their first shift of the following week; this affects employees who work on Sunday. Employees are highly encouraged to test at



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least 48 hours prior to their first shift of the week; this allows time for the results of testing to come back before starting their shift.

19. Will I receive pay for my time while testing?

Employees are expected to test during work hours. If employees have no choice but to test outside of normal working hours, **they must receive approval from their manager to test on their own time** to receive pay for testing.

20. Do I have to pay for the test itself?

No, Queen's will be paying for weekly testing for employees who meet the criteria under the current policy. QHS-paid tests do not extend to employees testing due to travel that is non-work related. Employees who choose to travel (non-work related) will be required to pay for their own test.

21. What happens if I don't perform my weekly testing?

Employees who do not comply with the weekly testing requirement will be suspended without pay according to the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy [SW-21-103](#) and may be terminated from employment.

22. Do I have to test weekly if I work from home?

Yes. Employees are required to test weekly even while working from home. Queen's is committed to protecting its workforce from COVID, even employees who work from home and are not exposed to patients or other staff.

23. What test will be used and how will it be sampled?

QHS will require a self-administered nasal swab. PCR nucleic acid amplification tests (NAAT) will be our standard testing platform. QHS and DLS will continue to evaluate new testing technologies and will be open to adding to our testing capabilities and offerings.

24. I tested positive for COVID already. Do I still need to participate in weekly testing?

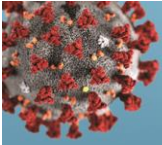
Unvaccinated employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 will be exempted from testing for 90 days from their positive test date. After the 90-day period, employees are required to resume with weekly testing.

25. What if I miss my test and still show up for work, can I get tested during my shift?

Generally speaking, employees who do not comply with weekly testing requirements will be suspended without pay according to established HR policies and sent home. In some instances, with the approval of the employee's manager, the employee may get tested during the shift and may continue to work provided they do not have any COVID symptoms. Employees are encouraged to get tested 48 hours prior to their first shift of the week and immediately notify their supervisor if they are unable to test.

26. What happens for employees with an approved workplace accommodation?

They may continue to work so long as they comply with the weekly COVID surveillance testing.



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27. If I am pregnant and would prefer to defer taking the vaccination until after birth. Is that acceptable and would I still be subject to weekly COVID tests?

All staff requesting an exemption may do so through the exemption process. All staff who receive an exemption will be required to comply with weekly testing. If you are pregnant and choose to wait on getting your vaccine, you must apply for that exemption and then comply with the regular testing.

In terms of pregnancy, the American College of Gynecology “recommends that pregnant individuals be vaccinated against COVID-19. ACOG recommends that lactating individuals be vaccinated against COVID-19.” <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/covid-19-vaccination-considerations-for-obstetric-gynecologic-care>.

28. If I have a reaction to the COVID vaccination and am unable to work, will I be paid for this time? Would my PTO or ESL be used or will the company keep me whole with regular pay?

You would need to go through Employee Health. Once you are seen by Employee Health and it is determined that you are not fit for duty, you would be compensated for time lost without using ESL or PTO.

29. If exempt from COVID vaccination and an employee gets COVID-19, will employee still be covered under COVID pay?

Yes, so long as the employee has been following the required safety and/or preventive measures.

CALL-IN:

30. How often are call-ins required to test?

Call-ins who are scheduled to work on a weekly basis will be required to follow weekly testing requirements. Call-ins who do not work on a weekly basis must test at the start of their first shift of the week.

31. How will call-ins be managed if we need them for a last-minute shift?

Last-minute call-ins must test at the start of their first shift of the week.

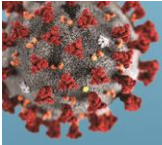
32. I am a call-in who works from home. Do I still need to get tested on a weekly basis?

Yes, call-ins who work from home must test on a weekly basis if working on a weekly basis.

PTO/LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

33. If I'm on PTO/ESL/PPL, am I still required to test weekly?

If employees are on PTO/ESL/PPL for less than 1 work week (Sun-Sat), they must follow the weekly testing requirement. If employees are on PTO/ESL/PPL for more than 1 work week (Sun-Sat), employees must test at the start of their first shift upon return to work. Employees traveling will be required to follow current travel guidelines and testing requirements.



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34. If I'm on a leave of absence (FMLA, Workers' Compensation, Personal, etc.), am I still required to test weekly?

If employees are on LOA for less than 1 work week (Sun-Sat), they must follow the weekly testing requirement. If employees are on LOA for more than 1 work week (Sun-Sat), employees must test at the start of their first shift upon return to work.

35. If I get removed from the schedule, can I use my PTO?

No, employees who are removed from the schedule for failure to follow exemption or testing requirements will be suspended without pay according to the COVID-19 Vaccination Policy [SW-21-103](#).

NIGHT/EVENING SHIFT:

36. I'm on the night or evening shift and scheduled testing isn't offered, how do I get tested?

Extended testing hours and coordinated testing dates and times are being provided for employees on night and evening shift. Please speak to your supervisor if you have any questions or concerns.

NEW HIRES:

37. What are the exemption and testing requirements for new hires?

- New hires will be required to be fully vaccinated or complete an exemption prior to their start date. This will take place during new hire form signing with HR.
- New hires who are not fully vaccinated will be required to perform weekly testing.
- New hires who have been made an offer prior to October 1, 2021 will follow the current exemption and testing policy. New hires who are made an offer on or after October 1, 2021 will have the option of a medical or religious exemption only.

NON-EMPLOYED MEDICAL STAFF/AGENCY WORKERS:

38. I have an agency worker/traveler who is not vaccinated. Will they be allowed to work?

Agency workers/travelers are required to be fully vaccinated. Agency workers/travelers who are not fully vaccinated will not be allowed to work.

39. Will non-employed physicians be charged for their test?

If tested at Queen's facility, testing for non-employed physicians will be paid for by Queen's.

40. What happens if a non-employed physician who is not fully vaccinated doesn't complete an exemption or participate in testing?

Non-employed physicians are required to follow the same policy as employees. If they do not comply, privileges will be suspended for 90 days or until they are fully vaccinated or have completed the exemption. If they don't comply within 90 days, privileges will be revoked.