

## Frequently Asked Questions

### COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate

**1. Who does the vaccine mandate impact at RRH and when are first doses required?**

The vaccine mandate applies to employees and affiliated personnel of Rochester Regional Health, including medical staff, vendors, consultants, community students, and contract labor. You must receive your first dose no later than September 27 to comply.

**2. Are religious accommodations allowed?**

The NYS DOH has removed the ability to seek a religious accommodation from the expanded regulations. In the event this changes, Rochester Regional Health is accepting applications for a religious exemption but that does not guarantee they will be granted or be allowed by the state.

**3. How to request an exemption from the policy?**

All RRH employees requesting an exemption can find the appropriate forms on the [toolkit](#) and requests should be submitted as soon as possible to [accommodations@rochesterregional.org](mailto:accommodations@rochesterregional.org)

**4. Who fills out a medical exemption form on behalf of a healthcare worker?**

Consistent with NYS DOH regulations, a [licensed physician or certified nurse practitioner](#) must certify that immunization with the COVID-19 vaccine would be detrimental to the health, based upon a pre-existing health condition, and must be per generally accepted medical standards.

**5. What happens if a medical exemption is approved or denied?**

Any individual who is granted a medical exemption will need to comply with the reasonable accommodations granted to them in place of getting the vaccine.

Any individual who is not granted a medical exemption will need to comply with the September 27 deadline.

**6. What happens if staff and affiliated personnel are not compliant by the deadline?**

Any RRH employee who has not provided documentation of their first dose by September 27, 2021, and has not been granted a medical exemption and related accommodation, will not be permitted to work and will be placed on unpaid leave for five (5) days. Regrettably, employment relationship will end if an RRH employee does not provide documentation of their first dose within that five (5) day period.

**7. If I don't get the vaccine and lose my job, am I eligible to collect unemployment benefits?**

Decisions around unemployment benefits (i.e. approved or not approved and benefit levels) are determined by New York State. Based on the information known to date, it is our understanding that individuals who leave employment due to declining vaccination are unlikely to be eligible for unemployment.

**8. *What to do if fully vaccinated?***

Employees who were vaccinated through Employee Health, your status will automatically update into Workday. Employees who received their vaccination at an outside facility, please ensure your vaccination status is updated in Workday and email proof of vaccination to [Employee Health](#).

**9. *Can I get a vacation payout if I decline the COVID vaccination?***

Rochester Regional Health will be issuing vacation payouts in accordance with Vacation Policy #TO-2. Please note that the policy states: "If separation is employee initiated, employee must provide at least two (2) weeks of advance notice. During this notice period, it is expected that any normally scheduled hours are worked and that employment will not end with vacation."

If an employee decides not to get vaccinated and does not submit their notice, the employment relationship will end on the New York State driven vaccination timeline. This will be considered a company initiated termination and vacation accruals will not be paid.

**10. *Am I still eligible for a pension and 403b if I refuse to get vaccinated?***

There is no impact to pension or 403b. Declining the vaccine will not impact retirement benefits any differently than any other termination (voluntary or involuntary). If an employee is vested, they will retain benefits that have been earned/accrued up until their termination date. If an employee is not vested in the pension or 403/401 match, they will not be entitled to any future benefits.

**11. *Does this mandate apply to teleworkers?***

Yes.

**12. *What if I have already had COVID? Do I still have to get the vaccine?***

At this time, natural immunity (getting infected and ill with COVID-19) is far riskier than getting vaccinated. It is also less likely to be as protective than vaccine-induced immunity.

**13. *What if I am on leave – do I have to be vaccinated by September 27?***

Employees returning from leave after 9/27 must receive their first dose before returning to work.

**14. *How can I get a one-on-one conversation as I have specific questions about the vaccine?***

If you have a specific question about getting vaccinated or can't see your doctor, please email the [COVID-19 Command Center](#), we will connect you with the right person.