

As experts in healing and saving lives, hospitals must have the trust, respect and flexibility to manage COVID-19 vaccine requirements in their own facilities. The people inside hospitals are unique and need to be protected – they are often elderly, pregnant or have other conditions that put them at greater risk.

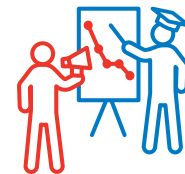


Vaccines Save Lives

Vaccines are one of the greatest life-saving inventions in human history. Innovations in vaccines have helped stop many diseases in their tracks. From polio to smallpox, vaccines protect patients, lessen disease spread and help prevent dangerous outbreaks.

Unfortunately:

1. Vaccines have **become politicized.**
2. Vaccines work so well, **their importance is overlooked.**
3. Vaccine **misinformation is everywhere.**



Hospitals Are Trusted Safe Zones in Their Communities

Hospitals save lives every day. They are a place of refuge, safety and care, whether that's in Midland, McAllen, Dallas or Dalhart.

Hospitals are a vibrant and critical part of their unique communities, and **hospitals make decisions every day** to ensure the safest possible environments for their employees and patients. This includes decisions about:

- Infection control
- Handwashing and masks
- Protective equipment
- Requiring flu vaccination of staff
- Instrument sterilization
- Prohibiting smoking



Every hospital is different. Every community is different. Hospitals should have the flexibility to make their own decisions about requiring COVID-19 vaccination of hospital staff. **A one-size-fits-all approach to health does not work in Texas.** As the saying goes, “If you’ve seen one hospital, you’ve seen *one* hospital.”

Hospitals Are Beholden to Federal Rules – And Payments

For a hospital to be able to receive Medicaid and Medicare payments, the federal government says hospitals must “ensure that all staff are fully vaccinated for COVID-19.” Hospitals can – and do – offer certain exemptions and still be in compliance with the federal standards.

However, there is action in Texas to undercut this. Texas hospitals strongly oppose efforts underway to hamstring them from being able to require vaccination of their own staff, many of whom are at the bedside every day with children and adults who are vulnerable to COVID-19. Facing extreme workforce shortages, hospitals must be able to keep staff healthy and working.

What’s at Stake? If Texas Tells Hospitals They **Can’t Require COVID-19 Vaccination of Employees:**

- COVID-19 may spread more easily, putting patients at risk.
- Texas hospitals could lose critical Medicaid and Medicare payments.
- Hospitals may close from financial strain, reducing access to care.
- Texas hospitals’ quality rankings may go down.
- Texas hospitals may struggle to recruit workers.



Exemptions Are Allowed

Right now, hospitals that require employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 can and do offer **exemptions for those who do not want to be vaccinated** – for medical or religious reasons.

COVID-19 Vaccine Myths



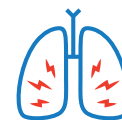
Myth: It’s Dangerous.

Fact: Nearly all ingredients are also in many foods – fats, sugars and salts – and vaccines do not contain preservatives, tissues, latex or metals.



Myth: Getting Sick Provides Better Immunity.

Fact: Getting vaccinated is a safer and more dependable way to build immunity.



Myth: It’s Not a Real Vaccine.

Fact: mRNA vaccines, like the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines, work differently than other vaccines but still trigger an immune response. COVID-19 is not the only mRNA vaccine. Influenza, rabies and Zika vaccines are also built with mRNA.



Science Says

Americans who received an updated COVID-19 vaccine were **14 times less likely to die** than those who received no vaccine.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

