

Mandatory vaccination for Non-Government Organisation health care workers

An update has been made to the [Public Health \(COVID-19 Vaccination of Health Care Workers\) Order 2021](#) (Public Health Order) that requires the vaccination of healthcare staff of non-government organisations (NGO) funded by specified NSW Health grants to provide services. This is to support the safety of our people and health consumers across NSW.

An exemption to Clause 4(1)(a) of the Public Health Order has been granted for these staff until 20 October 2021. This means that health care staff in NGOs providing services that are funded by specified NSW Health grants, must have their first vaccination on or before 20 October 2021 and their second vaccination by 30 November 2021. Staff will need to provide evidence to their employer that they have an appointment to receive their first does on or before 20 October 2021.

The mandatory requirement applies to health care staff providing services funded by:

- A Ministerially approved grant under the NGO Grant Program or
- A Program Grant, excluding those grants where the services do not directly involve the provision of health or clinical services.

Existing COVID-19 control measures such as physical distancing, hand hygiene, use of personal protective equipment and associated work practices are designed to keep staff, health consumers and visitors to health services in NSW safe from COVID-19.

A requirement for vaccination is a significant additional control measure available to health service providers in NSW to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission in health workplaces.

NSW Health and other health care providers all share a duty of care to staff and to our most vulnerable health consumers, who are at a heightened risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19.

In developing this update to the Public Health Order, NSW Health has discussed mandatory vaccination with unions, peak groups and health providers.

If relevant staff have not yet received their COVID-19 vaccinations, they need to book now:

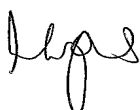
- There are over 3,000 NSW Health vaccination clinics, participating general practices and pharmacies across the State that are open for COVID-19 vaccination bookings.
- Book by visiting the [Australian Government vaccine clinic finder](#).

It is important that they arrange their COVID-19 vaccination appointment if required and provide evidence that they have an appointment booked prior to 20 October 2021.

If relevant staff have already received a COVID-19 vaccination (either one or both doses):

- They are required to provide evidence of vaccination status to their organisation.

Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for additional information or contact your grant manager if you have any questions or concerns.



Nigel Lyons
Deputy Secretary, Health System Strategy and Planning

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is mandatory vaccination being introduced?

Existing COVID-19 control measures are designed to keep staff, health consumers and visitors to health services in NSW safe from COVID-19.

A requirement for vaccination is a significant additional control measure available to manage the risk of COVID-19 transmission in health workplaces. NSW Health and other employers, including services provided through NSW Health grant funding, are required under Work, Health and Safety laws to implement “all reasonably practical control measures” to ensure the health and safety of staff.

Who will be covered by the mandatory vaccination requirements?

Two doses of COVID-19 vaccine will be required for health care staff* who work for non-government organisations (NGO) receiving NSW Health Ministerially Approved Grants, as well as health care staff who work for an organisation funded by a Program Grant, excluding Program Grants where the services do not directly involve the provision of health or clinical services.

*Staff includes Employees, Visiting Medical Officers, Volunteers, Contractors, Students.

Which Public Health Order has been updated?

An update to the [Public Health \(COVID-19 Vaccination of Health Care Workers\) Order 2021](#) has been made which adds a class of health care worker to Clause 2(1)(e) which means that the order now also covers people who provide services under a:

- Ministerially approved grant under the NGO Grant Program; or
- Program Grant [excluding Program Grants where the services do not directly involve the provision of health or clinical services].

An exemption to Clause 4(1)(a) has been granted until 20 October 2021, for this class of health care worker. This means that relevant staff have until 20 October 2021 to get their first dose.

What does your organisation and staff need to do?

If not already vaccinated, staff are encouraged to receive their COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible. Your organisation will be required to set up a system so that staff can advise of their vaccination status and provide proof of their vaccination status if requested. Vaccination information should be stored securely so that only authorised staff have access to information about vaccination compliance status.

NSW Health will also be able to request a summary of the vaccination status of your workforce.

If your staff have medical concerns about being vaccinated, they should speak to their doctor. Staff need to advise your organisation as soon as possible if they will not receive a COVID-19 vaccination by the proposed dates.

How can staff prove they have been vaccinated?

There are several options for staff to receive ‘proof of COVID-19 vaccination’:

- Staff can download their COVID-19 digital certificate via the [Express Plus Medicare](#) mobile app or via their [Medicare online account](#) through myGov.
 - Staff can add their COVID-19 digital certificate to their Apple Wallet or Google Pay.
 - Instructions are available on the [Services Australia website](#).
- If staff can’t get proof online, their vaccination provider can print their immunisation history statement for them.

- Staff can also call the [Australian Immunisation Register](#) on 1800 653 809 (Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm) and ask for their statement to be sent to them. It can take up to 14 days to arrive in the post.
- If staff are not eligible for Medicare, they can call the [Australian Immunisation Register](#) and request their certificate be mailed to them or add their COVID-19 certificate to their digital wallet using the Individual Healthcare Identifiers service (IHI service) through [myGov](#).

What happens if staff decide not to be vaccinated?

Specified NSW Health grant funded organisations are required to comply with the requirements of the Public Health Order and to manage risks associated with unvaccinated staff appropriately.

If your staff do not meet the COVID-19 vaccination requirement on the date it applies, then it is your organisations responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the health care worker complies. If this issue arises and will impact your organisation meeting your agreement requirements with NSW Health, please make arrangements to speak with your grant manager as soon as possible about this matter.

What happens if someone cannot be vaccinated?

An exemption to the Public Health Order requirements will only be considered if a person is unable, due to a medical contraindication, to be vaccinated against COVID-19. They will only be granted an exemption if they have medical contraindications to the available COVID-19 vaccines.

A medical practitioner will need to complete the medical contraindication [form](#) and submit it to your organisation to confirm this. If a worker is seeking an exemption, they should lodge the required form with your organisation as soon as possible.

What if staff have had COVID-19 in the last six months?

A temporary exemption will be granted for staff who have contracted COVID-19 in the last six months. A person will need to have proof of recent COVID-19 infection and be vaccinated once this six-month period has elapsed.

Who has NSW Health discussed this with before making this decision?

In developing the update to the Public Health Order, NSW Health has discussed mandatory vaccination with unions, peak groups and several grant funded providers.

FAQs have also been developed for the NSW Health workforce, which you may find useful to adapt or share with your organisation's staff. These can be accessed [via this link](#).