

	Subject: Mandatory Vaccination	Effective Date: 11/09/21
	Department/Service: Human Resources	Reviewed:
	Policy Number: 263	Revision:

**Purpose.** Arkansas Hospice and related entities (AH) adopt this policy in an effort to support the public health and welfare, to safeguard the health of our employees, patients, and the public at large, and to limit the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19. This policy is intended to comply in all respects with Arkansas Hospice’s legal obligations and is founded on the most current guidance available from the federal government and applicable public health agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Arkansas Department of Health, and other federal, state, and local health agencies.

**Scope.** Except as otherwise provided, all employees, as a condition of their employment, shall be required to present proof that they have received all mandatory vaccinations as directed by AH, which at this time includes the COVID-19 vaccination. Employees who fail to obtain a designated vaccine within the required period of time may be placed on unpaid leave, otherwise laid off, or terminated as determined by AH. All circumstances are addressed on a case-by-case basis, and AH will reasonably accommodate employees with closely-held religious beliefs or certain disabilities in a manner consistent with this policy.

**Procedures.** From time to time, AH will publish a list of mandatory vaccines covered by this policy and the timeframes within which employees must present proof of their inoculations. AH may provide onsite access to the vaccines if available, a list of locations to assist employees in receiving the vaccine, or other resources which employees may use to identify a vaccine provider. Employees should utilize their available health insurance benefits to cover the costs of any vaccines. In some cases, AH may cover the costs of the vaccines.

If work time is missed, employees may take paid time off (PTO) for time taken to receive vaccinations. Employees are to work with their managers to schedule appropriate time to comply with this policy.

Before the stated deadlines to be vaccinated have expired, employees will be required to provide either proof of vaccination or an approved reasonable accommodation to be exempted from the requirements. These exemptions will be reviewed periodically and can expire. If any changes to previous exemptions are made, the employee will be given ample time to comply with the change. For applicants who have received conditional offers of employment, proof of vaccination must be submitted before work begins when so directed by AH.

**Medical Advice; Exemptions.** You should consult with your health care provider regarding any medical questions about the efficacy, side effects, and consequences of receiving any particular

vaccine. AH will not provide medical advice, and AH does not assume liability for any negative outcomes that may occur individually in the event an employee experiences an adverse reaction to a vaccine.

Employees in need of an exemption from this policy due to a medical condition that is a contraindication to the vaccination or because of a sincerely held religious belief must complete and submit a Request for Accommodation form to Human Resources to begin the interactive accommodation process as soon as possible after vaccination deadlines have been announced. As part of our commitment to equal employment opportunity, AH provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodations would impose an undue hardship or pose a direct threat to health and safety. Specifically, AH provides reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity in the application process, to enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the job, and to enable an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. AH cannot make an accommodation unless it is aware of the need. Employees must provide AH with enough information to know of both the medical condition that is a contraindication to the vaccination and the desire for an accommodation that will enable the employee to perform the essential functions of his/her job. Following receipt of the employee's Request for Exemption/Accommodation, AH will engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify a possible accommodation. The interactive process is intended to clarify the employee's request and identify the appropriate exemption/reasonable accommodation. Human Resources representatives may ask the employee relevant questions that will enable AH to make an informed decision about the request. The exact nature of the dialogue will vary. AH makes these assessments on a case-by-case basis and in consultation with available public health guidance. AH reserves the right, as circumstances may require, to obtain second opinions or request additional documentation in the event sufficient information is not available to determine whether a reasonable accommodation is possible. No employee will be retaliated against for making good-faith requests for reasonable accommodations. Employees, however, may be subject to discipline and termination for any bad-faith requests, which may be considered a form of dishonesty.

**Confidentiality.** All medical information received about an employee as a result of this policy will be treated as confidential and stored separately from the employee's personnel file. This includes an employee's statement that he/she has, or suspects he/she has, an infectious disease, such as COVID-19 or influenza, as well as the employer's notes or other documentation from questioning an employee about symptoms. Medical information received about an employee as a result of this policy may be stored in the employee's medical file. Additionally, managers and supervisors will not disclose that an employee is receiving a reasonable accommodation.

**Questions.** If you have questions regarding this policy, you should feel free to consult with Human Resources. Except with respect to those with approved exceptions, employees who fail to obtain any vaccinations that are mandatory under this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.