



Department of Public Health

Monroe County, New York

Adam J. Bello
County Executive

Michael D. Mendoza, MD, MPH, MS
Commissioner of Public Health

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Unvaccinated County Health Workers, Health System Employees Will Be Required To Undergo Regular COVID Testing After Sept. 8

Employees of Monroe Community Hospital, the Monroe County Department of Public Health, Rochester Regional Health, URMC, the University of Rochester and UR Medicine affiliates will need to be vaccinated by Wednesday, Sept. 8, or undergo frequent regular COVID testing, Monroe County Executive Adam Bello, Commissioner of Public Health Dr. Michael Mendoza and leaders of the two health care systems said today.

“The COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, and have proven to protect people from serious illness and death even in the instances vaccinated individuals contract COVID-19. We must remain vigilant against the virus, particularly in health care settings as we continue to see increasing new daily positive cases here in Monroe County and across the state. This is good public health policy and will further protect our community from additional spread of COVID-19,” said County Executive Bello.

While details vary slightly at each employer, Dr. Mendoza said all have agreed on a common approach to ensuring a safe environment for staff members and the people they serve.

- Employees will be required to document their COVID vaccine status--vaccinated, choosing not to be vaccinated, approved medical exemption or approved religious exemption
- Soon after September 8, unvaccinated employees will be required to undergo frequent regular COVID testing, to wear masks indoors and practice social distancing at work
- Employees who decline to report their status or to undergo testing will face disciplinary consequences
- Employees vaccinated after September 8 can be released from the testing, masking, and distancing requirements once their fully vaccinated status is documented with the employer

“Our primary responsibility is to protect the health and safety of our community, and science shows us that getting vaccinated is the most important step we can take at this stage of the pandemic,” said Dr. Mendoza. “The vaccines are safe and effective against serious illness, hospitalization and death caused by COVID-19, and they are the key to eradicating this threat once and for all.”

Mark B. Taubman, MD, University of Rochester Senior Vice President of Health Sciences and URM Chief Executive Officer, said the staff vaccination program will be implemented across the University and at all UR Medicine affiliates—including [six hospitals](#), [two nursing homes](#), and [UR Medicine Home Care](#).

“Over the past seven months, hundreds of millions of injections have proven that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and extraordinarily effective at preventing serious illness,” Taubman said. “That’s why governments, universities, health systems and corporations across the country are moving quickly to adapt vaccine programs like the ones we are announcing today. The University is proud to join other Rochester employers in taking these steps to maintain the health and safety of students, patients, staff members, faculty, and everyone we serve across Upstate New York.”

“As healthcare workers, it is our responsibility to enhance the lives and preserve the health of the community,” said Robert Mayo, Executive Vice President and Chief Medical Officer at Rochester Regional Health. “The COVID-19 vaccine continues to be the safest, most effective way to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 and to minimize the illness if it is contracted.”

Wade Norwood, CEO of Common Ground Health and co-chair of the Finger Lakes COVID-19 Task Force, said today’s announcement builds on work being done to promote vaccine equity and access across the community.

“I am proud of the meaningful progress we’ve made in expanding equitable access to vaccines across the region by meeting people where they are, listening respectfully and addressing their concerns,” Norwood said. “Today’s announcement supports that effort, as County leaders and our largest employers encourage people to become vaccinated or adhere to enhanced precautions designed to keep everyone safe.”

