

TITLE: VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASE POLICY

PURPOSE: To reduce the transmission of infectious and communicable diseases.

POLICY STATEMENT:

Everyone must utilize all appropriate measures to prevent the spread of infectious and communicable diseases through vaccination, by utilizing personal protective equipment, or following other infection-control measures.

POLICY ELABORATION:

I. DEFINITIONS:

- A. **COVERED CONTRACTOR:** For purposes of this policy only, a Covered Contractor is an individual who is not a Harris Health Workforce Member, who provides services to or for Harris Health. Covered Contractors does not include individuals who infrequently provide ad hoc, non-health care services (e.g. annual elevator inspection) or services that are performed exclusively offsite and not at or adjacent to any site of patient care.
- B. **FLU SEASON:** Subject to any adjustments made by OHS, November 30th of each year through March 31st of the following calendar year.
- C. **HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL (HCP):** All paid and unpaid persons providing direct patient care or services or having direct patient contact in health-care settings at Harris Health facilities who have the potential for exposure to patients or to infectious materials, including bodily substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air.
- D. **MEDICAL STAFF:** All physicians, dentists, podiatrists, oral-maxillofacial surgeons, and Advanced Practice Professionals (APPs) who are appointed to the Medical Staff and who either (1) hold a faculty appointment at Baylor College of Medicine and/or The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston or

(2) are employed by Harris Health to provide healthcare services at designated Harris Health facilities.

- E. **OHS:** Harris Health's Department of Occupational Health Services.
- F. **PATIENT CARE/CONTACT AREA:** Physical locations where patient care or patient contact regularly occurs, including but not limited to admissions and registration; patient rooms; exam rooms; hallways of units where patient rooms are located; nursing stations; procedural areas; waiting areas; ambulatory care centers; eligibility centers; pharmacies; laboratories; and radiology.
- G. **PUBLIC HEALTH DISASTER:** A declaration by the Governor of a state of disaster and a determination by the commissioner that there exists an immediate threat from a communicable disease that:
 - 1. Poses a high risk of death or serious long-term disability to a large number of people; and
 - 2. Creates a substantial risk of public exposure because of the disease's high level of contagion or the method by which the disease is transmitted.
- H. **QUALIFIED EXEMPTION:** An exemption from Harris Health's vaccination requirements based on a medical or religious reason that has been approved pursuant to this Policy.
- I. **VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASES:** The diseases included in the most current recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- J. **WORKFORCE MEMBER:** For purposes of this Policy, Harris Health employees, Medical Staff, trainees, students, volunteers, and HCPs.

NOTE: Vaccination requirements, excluding the vaccination requirements for COVID-19, for contractors who do not otherwise meet the definition of HCP are not subject to this Policy. Individuals who qualify as a Covered Contractor are subject to the vaccination requirements pertaining to the COVID-19 vaccine set forth in further detail below.

II. REQUIRED VACCINATIONS:

- A. **The vaccine requirements set forth in this policy are conditions of employment, prerequisites for appointment or re-appointment to the Medical Staff, and prerequisites to access to any Harris Health facility.**
- B. All Workforce Members are required to be vaccinated against, possess proof of immunity from, or obtain a Qualified Exemption for the Vaccine Preventable Diseases as more further described in **Appendix A**.
- C. All Workforce Members and Covered Contractors are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in compliance with the requirements set forth in **Appendix B**.

See Appendix B for information regarding deadlines by which Workforce Members and Covered Contractors must (i) be vaccinated against COVID-19; or (ii) obtain a Qualified Exemption regarding vaccination against COVID-19.

- D. HCPs with the potential for exposure to blood or other potentially infectious body fluids must receive the Hepatitis B vaccination or obtain a Qualified Exemption.
- E. HCPs who work in clinical microbiology with meningococcal isolates must receive the vaccine for Neisseria Meningitidis (Meningococcal) Quadrivalent per direction from OHS.

III. PROCEDURES FOR NON-COVID 19 VACCINES:

The following procedures do not apply to the COVID-19 vaccination requirements. Please see Appendix B for the procedures to be followed for the COVID-19 vaccine.

- A. All Workforce Members must:
 - 1. Receive required vaccinations (or, when applicable present proof of immunity) or obtain a Qualified Exemption.

2. Provide OHS with written proof of vaccination or immunity from vaccination for each of the Vaccine Preventable Diseases listed in Appendix A if obtained outside OHS.
 - a. Acceptable proof of vaccination includes a physician note or immunization record which includes date of vaccination and lot number, if available.
 - b. Harris Health may, in its discretion or when permitted, rely on attestations of vaccination status instead of a physician note or immunization record for Workforce Members who are not Harris Health employees.
3. If granted a Qualified Exemption for the influenza vaccine, wear a surgical mask at all times while unvaccinated and while in any Patient Care/Contact Area from November 30th of each year through March 31st of the following calendar year.

Harris Health reserves the right to modify these requirements depending on circulation of influenza in the community.

- B. Any HCP who does not receive the meningococcal vaccine will not be allowed to work in high-risk lab areas with meningococcal isolates.

IV. QUALIFIED EXEMPTIONS:

Harris Health will grant Qualified Exemptions based only on appropriate medical or religious reasons that are supported with proper documentation.

With respect to Workforce Members who are subject to this Policy but are not Harris Health employees (for example, Medical Staff), Harris Health will coordinate with third-parties as necessary to address any issues that may arise concerning Qualified Exemptions.

Nothing in this Policy shall obligate Harris Health to grant a Qualified Exemption to anyone who is not a Harris Health employee.

A. Medical Exemptions:

Medical Exemptions for required vaccinations may be provided for certain conditions identified as medical contraindications or precautions by the most current recommendations of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (AICP) or any other recommendations recognized by OHS.

1. Anyone requesting a medical exemption must complete and submit one of the following two forms: (1) Request for Exemptions from Required Vaccines (Non-COVID Vaccines) (Harris Health Form #285107); or (2) Request for Medical Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement (Harris Health Form #286032) to OHS or Medical Staff Services within thirty (30) days of being notified of the required vaccination.
2. A request for a Medical Exemption will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the OHS Medical Director or their designee within twenty-one (21) days of receiving the request.
 - a. **Specific Requirements for a Medical Exemption from the COVID-19 Vaccine:**
 - i. Medical Exemptions for COVID-19 will only be granted if an individual submits the Harris Health Medical Exemption form (Harris Health Form #286032) containing the following elements and that is signed and dated by a licensed practitioner acting within his or her scope and who is not the individual requesting the exemption:
 - a. Written confirmation of the clinical contraindication to each COVID-19 vaccine;
 - b. Information specifying that each of the authorized COVID-19 vaccines are clinically contraindicated for the Workforce Member to receive and the recognized clinical reason for the contraindication;
 - c. A statement from the licensed practitioner recommending that the Workforce Member be

exempted from Harris Health's COVID-19 vaccination requirements based on recognized clinical contraindications.

3. The Medical Exemption Form must be signed and dated and be fully completed by a health-care provider attesting to the medical contraindications.
4. If a Medical Exemption is provided for a temporary condition, the exemption request must include the time frame needed and is only valid for that duration.
5. If a Medical Exemption is provided for a permanent condition, a subsequent Medical Exemption form need only be completed and submitted if vaccine technology changes eliminating the contraindication on which the medical exemption is based.
6. If a Medical Exemption request is denied, the requestor will be notified of the denial, including the basis for the denial, and will be required to be vaccinated pursuant to this Policy.

B. Religious Exemptions:

1. Anyone who declines to be vaccinated because of a religious belief must complete one of the following two (2) forms: (1) Request for Exemptions from Required Vaccines (Non-COVID Vaccines) (Harris Health Form #285107); or (2) Request for Religious Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement (Harris Health Form #286031) and submit it to OHS within thirty (30) days of being notified of the vaccine requirement.
2. The Religious Exemption Form must be signed and dated by the requestor and, if applicable, be completed by a representative of the religious group to which the individual belongs.
3. A request for a Religious Exemption will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by Human Resources or its designee within twenty-one (21) days of receiving the request.

- a. Requests for Religious Exemptions for any COVID-19 vaccination requirement will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by a panel consisting of one or more of the following: (i) representatives of Occupational Health; (ii) representatives of Human Resources; or (iii) representatives of Spiritual Care.
 - b. Membership in this panel may overlap with membership in a panel considering Medical Exemptions or vice-versa.
4. Each Request for Religious Exemption will be evaluated in accordance with Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 6.44 Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 3465 Religious Exemption.
 5. Human Resources will notify the requestor in writing regarding whether their request for a Religious Exemption has been granted or if more information is needed to evaluate the Religious Exemption.
 6. If a Religious Exemption request is denied, the requestor will be notified of the denial, including the basis for the denial, and will be required to be vaccinated pursuant to this policy.

C. Non-Discrimination & Non-Retaliation.

Harris Health will not discriminate or retaliate against a Workforce Member with a Qualified Exemption. However, requiring a Workforce Member to use personal protective equipment such as gloves and masks, engage in any other infection-control measures, or to follow any requirements necessary for the protection of patients will not be considered retaliatory action.

V. INFECTION CONTROL PROCEDURES:

Workforce Members must follow all infection-control directives or requirements from Harris Health or the CDC.

VI. COMPLIANCE:

- A. Any Harris Health Employee who fails to comply substantially with this Policy after being notified of their non-compliance will be suspended without pay until they comply with the Policy. If the Harris Health Employee fails to comply with the requirements of this Policy after thirty (30) days of being notified of their non-compliance, the Harris Health Employee will be terminated.
- B. Any non-Harris Health Employee who fails to comply with the requirements of this Policy shall have their badge access inactivated and will not be permitted to work in Harris Health facilities.
- C. Any volunteer who fails to comply with this Policy will have their volunteer status rescinded.

VII. VACCINE SHORTAGE CONTINGENCY:

- A. In the event of a vaccine shortage, Infection Prevention, OHS, and Pharmacy will determine an appropriate distribution plan for the resources available. Required vaccinations will be offered to Harris Health employees based on job function and risk of exposure to the Vaccine Preventable Diseases.
- B. Priority for vaccinations will be given to Harris Health employees who:
 - 1. Provide direct patient care with prolonged face-to-face contact with patients;
 - 2. Care for patients at high-risk for complications from a Vaccine Preventable Disease;
 - 3. Have the highest risk of exposure to patients with a Vaccine Preventable Disease; or
 - 4. Are at high-risk for complications from a Vaccine Preventable Disease.

VIII. PUBLIC HEALTH DISASTER:

- A. In the event of a Public Health Disaster, HCPs with Qualified Exemptions may be barred from providing direct patient care or accessing patient contact areas. This may result in an HCP being relieved of their work duties.
- B. The time period during which an HCP employed by Harris Health is relieved of work duties pursuant to the preceding paragraph will be classified as Paid Time Off (PTO) in accordance with the Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 6.03 Paid Time Off (PTO) if the employee has PTO available.

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Federal Register. 2021. Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Omnibus COVID-19 Health Care Staff Vaccination. [online] Available at:
<<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/11/05/2021-23831/medicare-and-medicaid-programs-omnibus-covid-19-health-care-staff-vaccination>> [Accessed 12 November 2021].

Harris Health Form #285107, Request for Exemption from Required Vaccines (Non-COVID Vaccines)

Harris Health Form #286031, Request for Religious Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement

Harris Health Form #286032, Request for Medical Exemption from COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement

Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann., Section 81.003(7).

Tex. Health & Safety Code Ann., Section 224.002.

CDC. Prevention of Hepatitis B Virus Infection in the United States. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. MMWR, 2018;67 (RR1)

POLICY AND REGULATIONS MANUAL

Policy No:	3.55.00
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Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, “*Immunization of Health-care Personnel Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)*”, Vol.60/No.7, November 25, 2011.

Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 6.44 Reasonable Accommodation Policy.

Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 3465 Religious Exemption.

Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 6.03 Paid Time Off.

Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 3.55.01 Employee Health Scope of Services.

Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 6.20 Employee Discipline.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Healthcare Personnel Vaccination Recommendations. 2017, Immunize.org

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY:

Harris Health System Occupational Health Services

REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:

Effective Date	Version # (If Applicable)	Review/ Revision Date (Indicate Reviewed or Revised)	Approved by:
	1.0	Approved 11/13/2012	Operations Policy Committee
		Approved 01/08/2013	Interdisciplinary Clinical Committee
		Approved 01/25/2013	CHP Medical Executive Committee

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		Approved 02/04/2013	BTGH Medical Executive Committee
		Approved 02/06/2013	LBJ Medical Executive Committee
		Approved 02/12/2013	Medical Executive Board
03/28/2013		Approved 03/28/2013	Board of Managers (Board Motion Number 13.03-47
	2.0	Revised/Approved 11/20/2015	System Infection Prevention Committee
		Approved 12/22/2015	SNEC
		Approved 1/4/2016	LBJ MEC
		Approved 1/6/2016	BTH MEC
		Approved 1/22/2016	ACS MEC
		Approved 02/09/2016	Medical Executive Board
		Approved 02/09/2016	Interdisciplinary Clinical Committee
		Approved 12/13/2016	Structure and Organizational Standards
	3.0	Approved 07/30/2020	Structure and Organizational Standards
	4.0	Approved 09/14/2021	Structure and Organizational Standards
		Approved 09/14/2021	Interdisciplinary Clinical Committee
	5.0	Expedited Approval 11/30/2021 via Rapid Cycle	EVP and Chief Compliance and Risk Officer; SVP Human Resources

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	6.0	Expedited Approval 12/15/2021 via Rapid Cycle	EVP and Chief Compliance and Risk Officer; SVP Human Resources
	7.0	Expedited Approval 01/12/2022 via Rapid Cycle	EVP and Chief Compliance and Risk Officer; SVP Human Resources

APPENDIX A – VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

VACCINE	DOSING SCHEDULE	WHO	REQUIREMENT
Influenza	Annually by November 30 th of the current flu season	All Workforce Members	Proof of vaccination
Measles	2 doses >28 days apart	All HCPs	Proof of 2 vaccinations or serological evidence of immunity
Mumps	2 doses >28 days apart	All HCPs	Proof of 2 vaccinations or serological evidence of immunity
Rubella	1 dose	All HCPs	Proof of 1 vaccination or serological evidence of immunity
Varicella	2 doses >28 days apart	All HCPs	Proof of 2 vaccinations or serological evidence of immunity
Tetanus-Diphtheria-acellular Pertussis (Tdap)	1 dose	All HCPs	Documentation of 1 dose
Hepatitis B*	2 dose series at 0 and 1 month 3 dose series at 0, 1 and 6 months	HCPs with the potential for exposure to blood or other potentially infectious body fluids.	Serological evidence of immunity

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Meningococcal	1 dose then a booster dose every 5 years if remains at risk	HCPs who work in clinical microbiology with meningococcal isolates	Documentation of vaccination
COVID-19 (subject to paragraph II.B)	2 dose series (plus recommended boosters); 1 dose series (plus recommended boosters)	All Workforce Members and Covered Contractors	Documentation of vaccination

APPENDIX B – COVID-19 VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

I. Vaccination Requirement Compliance Dates for Workforce Members:

A. All **current** Harris Health Workforce Members must be vaccinated against COVID-19 or have requested a medical or religious exemption from the COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with the below deadlines:

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Action</u>
January 27, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single dose vaccine of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine; OR • First dose of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccine; OR • Workforce member has been granted a medical or religious exemption; OR • Workforce member has been granted a temporary delay from the vaccination requirement in accordance with the CDC's recommendations due to clinical precautions and considerations, including but not limited to, receipt of monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma for COVID-19 treatment or individuals with acute illness secondary to COVID-19.
February 28, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single dose vaccine of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine; OR

- Second dose of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccine; OR
- Workforce member has been granted a medical or religious exemption; OR
- Workforce member has been granted a temporary delay from the vaccination requirement in accordance with the CDC's recommendations due to clinical precautions and considerations, including but not limited to, receipt of monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma for COVID-19 treatment or individuals with acute illness secondary to COVID-19.

B. All Workforce Members hired on or after **January 4, 2022**, must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 **before** his or her first day of work or must have been granted a religious or medical exemption, or a temporary delay in accordance with the CDC's recommendations due to clinical precautions and considerations **before** his or her first day of work.

C. Submission and Acceptable Forms of Documentation/Proof of COVID-19 Vaccination and COVID-19 Boosters:

- a. Harris Health's OHS is responsible for tracking and documenting Workforce Members, excluding Medical Staff members, vaccination status against COVID-19 and any booster doses received by Workforce Members and as recommended by the CDC.
- b. If a Workforce Member, excluding Medical Staff, receives his or her COVID-19 vaccine or a recommended booster shot at a Harris Health facility, Harris Health's OHS will maintain documentation of the Workforce Member's vaccination and the Workforce Member does not need to submit documentation/proof of vaccination.

- c. Harris Health Medical Staff Services will maintain documentation of the vaccination status, including any boosters received, of Harris Health's Medical Staff.
- d. If a Workforce Member receives his or her COVID-19 vaccine at a non-Harris Health facility or receives his or her recommended COVID-19 booster shot at a non-Harris Health facility, it is the responsibility of the Workforce Member to submit to OHS or Medical Staff Services proof of vaccination against COVID-19 by the above noted compliance dates or **before** his or her first day of work.
- e. Workforce Members, excluding Medical Staff, may submit his or her documentation/proof of vaccination by uploading one of the following to ReadySet.
 - i. A copy of a CDC COVID-19 vaccination card;
 - ii. A legible photo of a CDC COVID-19 card;
 - iii. Documentation of vaccination from a health care provider (i.e. an attestation of vaccination); or a copy of the Workforce Member's medical record showing vaccination; or
 - iv. Information from the State of Texas's immunization information system.

D. Documentation of Exemptions or Temporary Delay from COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement:

- a. OHS will be responsible for tracking and maintaining documentation of medical or religious exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccine that are granted to Workforce Members, excluding Medical staff.
- b. OHS will be responsible for tracking and maintaining documentation of a temporary delays from the COVID-19 vaccine that is granted to Workforce Members, excluding Medical Staff.

- c. Harris Health Medical Staff Services will be responsible for tracking and maintaining documentation of medical or religious exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccine as well as temporary delays from the COVID-19 vaccine that are granted to members of the Medical Staff.

E. Accommodations for Qualified Exemptions or Temporary Delays from COVID-19 Vaccine:

- a. If a Workforce Member is granted a Qualified Exemption or a temporary delay to vaccination against COVID-19, appropriate accommodations will be made pursuant to Harris Health System Policy and Procedure 6.44 Reasonable Accommodation Policy, as well as other applicable Harris Health policies or procedures, including but not limited to those regarding infection control.
- b. Workforce Members who are granted a Qualified Exemption or a Temporary Delay from the COVID-19 vaccine may be required to do the following:
 - i. Perform weekly COVID-19 tests;
 - ii. Wear a mask and other appropriate PPE at all times while on Harris Health property; and/or
 - iii. Socially distance when feasible.
- c. Harris Health reserves the right to explore alternative reasonable accommodations including but not limited to removal of a Workforce Member from a high-risk patient care areas (e.g., ICU, Labor & Delivery).

II. Vaccination Requirements for Covered Contractors:

- a. All Covered Contractors must be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- b. Covered Contractors must submit proof of vaccination to Harris Health before being permitted to enter a Harris Health facility.

- c. Harris Health will maintain documentation of Harris Health's Covered Contractor's vaccination status.

III. Contingency Planning:

- a. In the event of a local or regional emergency declaration, such as a hurricane or flooding, or any other event that necessitates the use of unvaccinated Workforce Members and Covered Contractors, Harris Health will permit Workforce Members and Covered Contractors who are unvaccinated to enter Harris Health's premises for the duration of the emergency.
- b. Unvaccinated Workforce Members and Covered Contractors who enter a Harris Health facility for the duration of an emergency must comply with the infection control measures that are required of Workforce Members for whom a Qualified Exemption has been granted or for whom a temporary delay has been granted, including but not limited to, the testing and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, including face masks.