

California Implements First-in-the-Nation Measures to Encourage State Employees and Health Care Workers to Get Vaccinated

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State employees and health care workers must show proof of vaccination or get tested regularly

State encourages all local governments and businesses to adopt similar measures

SACRAMENTO – Today, the State of California is taking decisive action to combat the spread of COVID-19 and protect vulnerable communities – implementing a first-in-the-nation standard to require all state workers and workers in health care and high-risk congregate settings to either show proof of full vaccination or be tested at least once per week, and encourage all local government and other employers to adopt a similar protocol.

“We are now dealing with a pandemic of the unvaccinated, and it’s going to take renewed efforts to protect Californians from the dangerous Delta variant,” said Governor Gavin Newsom. “As the state’s largest employer, we are leading by example and requiring all state and health care workers to show proof of vaccination or be tested regularly, and we are encouraging local governments and businesses to do the same. Vaccines are safe – they protect our family, those who truly can’t get vaccinated, our children and our economy. Vaccines are the way we end this pandemic.”

California will also be requiring health care settings to verify that workers are fully vaccinated or tested regularly. Unvaccinated workers will be subject to at least weekly COVID-19 testing and will be required to wear appropriate PPE. This requirement also applies to high-risk congregate settings like adult and senior residential facilities, homeless shelters and jails. These steps will help protect vulnerable patients and residents.

The new policy for state workers will take effect August 2 and testing will be phased in over the next few weeks. The new policy for health care workers and congregate facilities will take effect on August 9, and health care facilities will have until August 23 to come into full compliance.

Despite California leading the nation in vaccinations, with more than 44 million doses administered and 75 percent of the eligible population having received at least one dose, the state is seeing increasing numbers of people who refused to get the vaccine being admitted to the ICU and dying. This increase is heavily due to the Delta variant, which is more contagious and kills people faster:

- As of last week, California’s statewide case rate more than quadrupled from a low in May of 1.9 cases/100,000/day to at least 9.5 cases/100,000.
- Our testing positivity was at a low of 0.7 percent in June, now it has risen to 5.2 percent.
- Our hospitalizations were at a low in June of under 900, and we are now approaching 3,000.
- The vast majority of new cases are among the unvaccinated, with 600 percent higher case rates among the unvaccinated than for those who are vaccinated.

“California has administered more vaccines than any other state, with 75 percent of those eligible having gotten at least one dose, and we were weeks ahead of meeting President Biden’s 70 percent goal. But we must do more to fight disinformation and encourage vaccine-hesitant communities and individuals,” said Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly. “The Delta variant is up to 60 percent more infectious than the Alpha strain but many times more infectious than the original COVID-19 strain. If you have been waiting to get vaccinated, now is the time.”

The State of California remains committed to keeping the state’s economy open while ensuring that employees feel safe in the workplace. To that end, the state is encouraging employers to ensure that their employees are vaccinated, and will lead by example by implementing new vaccination measures for state and health care workers.

In addition to these new measures, the state continues its efforts to vaccinate Californians. Last week, California surpassed 2 million newly vaccinated individuals since launching its incentive program, [Vax for the Win](#). The program increased HPI Q1 vaccinations, and increased doses administered to the Latinx population by 10 percent. It also successfully slowed the rate of decline that California was experiencing in vaccination rates. The program’s peak showed a [33 percent increase](#) in vaccinations, “outpacing the inoculation trends in much of the country,” including more recently a 4.4 percent increase for the week ending July 14 – a promising sign in California, as vaccination rates declined nationwide.

In the preliminary data for the week ending July 25th, we've seen an increase of 16 percent in the number of people getting their first doses of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, from 220,294 two weeks ago to 254,807 this past week. We are seeing this trend very broadly, representing 51 out of 58 counties.

Other Vaccine Outreach and Equity Efforts. California has proactively engaged in a multi-pronged outreach and incentives strategy to reach holdouts, especially in communities hardest hit by the pandemic and those who have been particularly reticent (e.g., homebound, limited transportation and flexibility, higher vaccine hesitancy and/or living in a more remote area). Efforts have become more surgical and continue to be data driven: transitioning from mass sites to smaller, more targeted efforts, and continuing to intensify our outreach and education efforts by deploying mobile capacity, and to otherwise make it easier for people to access vaccines. Such outreach/incentive efforts to achieve greater equity have included:

Multimedia and Multicultural Public Education Campaigns. The Let's Get to Immunity Campaign is now accompanied by a youth 12+ campaign reaching families. Efforts are leveraging partnerships with over 400 ethnic media outlets that cover over 25 languages, including indigenous languages.

'Get Out the Vaccine' Phone Bank and Door-Knocking Campaign. Modeled after successful ground-level campaigns, the state "Get Out the Vaccine" effort coordinates with 70 community-based organizations. As of July 13, the "Get Out the Vaccine" campaign has resulted in 1.3 million conversations to promote vaccination via personal phone calls and door-to-door canvassing in less advantaged neighborhoods in California.

Supporting Community Organizations for Outreach, Direct Appointment Assistance and Referrals. California's investment and public-private partnerships total \$127.7 million in support of approximately 500 community-based organizations for outreach to underserved communities. A subset of these organizations have already facilitated approximately 184,986 vaccine appointments and 710,429 referrals to appointment platforms or providers.

Health Care Provider-Based Efforts. A new community provider grant program called the CalVaxGrant, (beginning July 12 through August 13), is intended to reimburse practices up to \$55,000 to set up their offices as small, community-based COVID-19 vaccination sites. As trusted messengers, doctors, pediatricians and providers can proactively reach community members as well as answer questions when patients come into their offices. The Department of Health Care Services is also working to increase the vaccination rates of Medi-Cal recipients including: engaging managed care plans in weekly calls, encouraging their outreach to patients, sharing weekly beneficiary vaccination data and disseminating a Quality Improvement Postcard with strategies and techniques to address vaccine hesitancy.

Community/Business Partnerships

- **Barbershops:** "Helping Communities Help Themselves" is a partnership with the Black Beauty and Wellness Foundation that has established 100 statewide barber shops, beauty shops and beauty supply stores as community-based COVID-19 resource centers. Shops and stylists are promoting information about vaccines and masking up until you are vaccinated.
- **Higher Educational Institutions:** The campaign has engaged the CCC, CSU, and UC systems, as well as the AICCU (Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities) to share information about the Vaccinate ALL 58 campaign and opportunities to partner and encourage more students to get vaccinated so they can safely return to campus. Each of these groups was provided a customizable toolkit.
- **School-Based Organizations:** School based organizations are assisting with a back-to-school push through a toolkit and earned media opportunities.
- **Faith-Based Outreach:** Faith-based organizations and leaders are trusted messengers in their communities. Through these networks, the campaign is able to provide clear, factual and accurate information about vaccines to faith leaders and their communities. Many of these partnerships have led to co-hosting vaccine clinics in the faith communities.
- **McDonald's:** McDonald's is hosting over 150 [vaccination pop-up clinics](#) at more than 80 restaurant locations in 11 different LHJs across the state. 107 have already been completed.
- **Six Flags:** More than 42,000 of 50,000 available Six Flag tickets have been distributed at 100 participating vaccine locations throughout the state, mainly in low-income and high-need areas. Nearly every participating provider reported that the ticket incentive helped improve patient turnout, with one provider saying tickets helped encourage patients' family members to get vaccinated. Another provider reported seeing a large uptick in teens deciding to get vaccinated to get a ticket.