

# PEACEHEALTH WILL REQUIRE COVID-19 VACCINATION BY AUG. 31

On Aug. 3, PeaceHealth announced that starting Aug. 31, 2021, all caregivers will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or submit a qualifying medical exemption. Unvaccinated individuals will be sub-

ject to regular COVID-19 testing, as well as additional masking, potential reassignment to non-patient care settings, and other safety protocols. The policy will apply to all caregivers, including providers, students, con-

tractors, vendors, and volunteers.

“Though nearly 80% of PeaceHealth caregivers have already been vaccinated, the rise in hospitalizations in our communities is a stark reminder that we are facing a public health emergency and we must do more,” said Dr. Doug Koekkoek, PeaceHealth’s Chief Physician Executive. “We believe all healthcare workers who are medically able should get a COVID-19 vaccine to keep themselves, our patients and our communities safe. Doing so is part of our mission to promote personal and community health and our vision to make sure that every person receives safe, compassionate care.”

While the organization has had high rates of vol-

untary caregiver vaccination, after thoughtful deliberation and a formal ethical discernment, PeaceHealth joins many health systems across the country, and professional organizations including the Catholic Health Association, the American Hospital Association, the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association and others, in ensuring public health by requiring vaccination.

Bob K. Pelz, MD, PeaceHealth’s system Medical Director of Infection Prevention, noted that, “New variants of COVID-19 pose a critical threat to those unable to be vaccinated, including children and the medically vulnerable. It is our moral obligation to first do no harm

and act for the common good. COVID-19 vaccines are proven to be the best way to protect ourselves and reduce the likelihood of harming others.”

This new policy is a reflection of the organization’s shared commitment to ensure every patient receives safe care at PeaceHealth and is part of a multi-measured approach to protect caregivers and patients, along with the supply of personal protective equipment, routine testing, masking, social distancing, diligent hygiene, contact tracing and proper quarantining.

PeaceHealth, based in Vancouver, Wash., is a not-for-profit Catholic health system offering care to communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska.

PeaceHealth has approximately 16,000 caregivers, a medical group practice with more than 1,200 providers and 10 medical centers serving both urban and rural communities throughout the Northwest. In 1890, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace founded what has become PeaceHealth. The Sisters shared expertise and transferred wisdom from one medical center to another, always finding the best way to serve the unmet need for healthcare in their communities.

Today, PeaceHealth is the legacy of the founding Sisters and continues with a spirit of respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice in fulfilling its mission.

For more information, visit [peacehealth.org](http://peacehealth.org).

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### COVID from page 1A

Scott Palmer of the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) said: “This is a reasonable and sensible approach which respects the individual choices of health care workers while also protecting public health. ONA believes COVID-19 vaccinations are critical to protecting our members, our patients, our families and our communities and we urge all Oregonians who can get vaccinated to do so now.”

“ONA is also gratified to note that Oregon’s current law provides the state the flexibility necessary to

respond to public health emergencies via regulation. ONA is eager to continue our work with hospitals and community groups to encourage vaccinations through a wide range of options including free vaccine clinics, vaccine education, vaccination incentives and community outreach to improve vaccination rates and address the rampant disinformation that is creating uncertainty and fueling vaccine hesitancy.

“Vaccination is a critical tool to keep Oregonians healthy and safe and Gov. Brown’s announcement today will help close the gap in vaccination rates for Oregon’s valuable health care workers.”

The new rule applies to personnel in health care settings who have direct or indirect contact with

patients or infectious materials.

The Governor’s Office continues to look at additional health and safety options to protect Oregonians against the highly contagious Delta variant, including vaccination and testing policies for state workers, with conversations continuing with stakeholders about how similar protective measures can be implemented in various state workplaces.

Brown called on other public and private employers in Oregon to consider measures to facilitate their employees’ access to vaccines: “As we have throughout this pandemic, we are learning to adapt to the new reality the Delta variant has created. I am encouraging Oregon cities, counties,

businesses, and employers to think creatively, and to consider measures such as paid time off for vaccination, and incentives for employees, in addition to instituting masking requirements and other health and safety measures in the workplace. I am doing the same with the State of Oregon’s workforce, as we look for ways to remove barriers to easy access to vaccination.”

State law currently prohibits employers from independently mandating vaccines for certain limited categories of workers, including health care workers, an issue the governor intends to work with stakeholders and legislators to address in the February 2022 session.

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 Wed. Ministries 1-8 Grade 7 p.m.

**CROSS ROAD ASSEMBLY OF GOD**  
 Corner of 10th & Maple- 541-997-3533  
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 Wednesdays at 7pm  
<https://www.florencecrossroadag.org/church-online>  
 Other platforms update after the service.  
[florencecrossroadag.org](mailto:florencecrossroadag.org)  
[office@florencecrossroadag.org](mailto:office@florencecrossroadag.org)

**FLORENCE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
 2nd & Ivy - 541-997-2961 - Non-Denominational Service is on Sunday at 10:00 a.m.  
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 Pre-Denominational (Romans 16:16)  
 1833 Tamarack Street  
 (2 blocks east of Hwy. 101 on 18th St.)  
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[www.churchofchristflorence.org](http://www.churchofchristflorence.org)

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 1318 Rhododendron Dr. • 541-997-2523  
 Sunday Service 11am (Children Sunday School)  
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**FLORENCE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST**  
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**FLORENCE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP**  
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**FLORENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
 2nd & Kingwood • (541) 997-6025  
 Link to Sunday services at [www.florenceunitedmethodist.org](http://www.florenceunitedmethodist.org) or find us on Facebook.

**FOUR SQUARE CHURCH**  
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Give us a call 541-997-3441 to get us your updates or email to: [mberg@thesiuslawnews.com](mailto:mberg@thesiuslawnews.com)

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