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The Minnesota Public Health Association Supports Governor Tim Walz’s decision to require COVID-19 vaccination or to be tested weekly for all on-site state employees by September 8, 2021

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The Minnesota Public Health Association (MPHA) supports Governor Walz’s decision to require all state employees working on-site to receive the COVID-19 vaccine by September 8, 2021, due to the recent COVID-19 surge and the availability of safe and effective vaccines. Employees not vaccinated, must receive a negative COVID-19 test at least weekly. COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are once again rising throughout the United States, because of highly contagious variants, including the Delta variant, and significant numbers of unvaccinated people.¹ All authorized vaccines in the United States are highly effective at preventing severe illness and death. Vaccination is the primary way to put the pandemic behind us and avoid the return of stringent public health measures.

A growing list of American governments are requiring workers to be vaccinated. New York, Virginia and Puerto Rico are among those that have instituted similar directives, and President Joe Biden recently instituted those orders for all federal employees and the U.S. military. Governor Walz’s announcement, which includes all “state agency employees,” also listed numerous hospital networks, institutions such as colleges and universities, and major employers such as Tyson Foods, Microsoft, United Airlines and Disney as among those that have also instituted COVID-19 vaccine mandates.² The American Public Health Association has also released a joint statement in support of COVID-19 vaccine mandates for all workers in health and long-term care³, additionally, the National Education Association, the largest U.S. teachers’ union announced support for vaccination for educators.⁴

1 [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Covid Data Tracker Weekly Review.](https://www.cdc.gov/covid/tracker/)

2 Governor Walz Announces Vaccination Requirements for State Agency Employees
<https://mn.gov/governor/news/?id=1055-493652> Accessed on 8/12/2021

3 <https://apha.org/News-and-Media/News-Releases/APHA-News-Releases/2021/COVID-19-vaccine-mandates>

4 The largest U.S. teachers’ union announces support for vaccination or testing for educators.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/12/world/teachers-union-vaccine-mandate.html> Accessed on 8/12/2021



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This directive is vital to keep state employees safe as well as the people they serve, especially people of color and American Indians who suffer disproportionately from COVID-19. These inequities arise from structural racism, discrimination, and conscious and unconscious bias that is engrained in all our systems. The data is clear; The Delta variant is spreading rapidly across five states with the lowest vaccination rates in the country—those being Alabama, Louisiana, Wyoming, Idaho, and Mississippi.⁵ Minnesota is again leading by example and ensuring that public employees are vaccinated to protect themselves, their co-workers, and their communities. This important public health action is being adopted by businesses and colleges across the state and the nation and is a critical step to stem the tide of the coronavirus pandemic.

⁵ Delta variant hits hard in the five worst states for vaccination rates: It's spreading 'like a tsunami,' one health official says. <https://news.yahoo.com/delta-variant-hits-hard-five-145039569.html> Accessed on 8/12/2021

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