



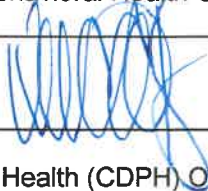
## INFORMATION NOTICE 21-03

**Date** September 9, 2021

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**To** Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) Contract Agencies, Fee-for-Service Providers, and Staff Working at Behavioral Health Care Facilities

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**From** Veronica Kelley, DSW, LCSW, Director 

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**Subject** Impact of California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Officer Orders Pertaining to "Other Health Care Facilities", including Behavioral Health Facilities.

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**Purpose** To reiterate the requirements specified in the CDPH Orders applicable to DBH and Contractor operated behavioral health facilities. Said requirements impact County DBH behavioral health facilities, contracted behavioral health facilities, fee-for-service provider facilities, and staff (also referred to as "workers") assigned to work in these facilities.

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**Background** The CDPH has issued State Public Health Officer Orders dated July 26, 2021 and August 5, 2021, to address the increase in COVID-19 cases in the state and help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among vulnerable populations in hospitals, high-risk congregate settings, and Other Health Care settings. The Orders impact DBH and contractors based on facility type and "workers" assigned to work at these facilities, as follows:

### Impacted Facilities

- Acute Health Care and Long-Term Care Setting
  - General Acute Care Hospitals
  - Skilled Nursing Facilities (including Substance Facilities)
  - Intermediate Care Facilities
- High-Risk Congregate Settings
  - Adult and Senior Care Facilities
  - Homeless Shelters
  - State and Local Correctional Facilities and Detention Centers
- Other Health Care Facilities
  - Acute Psychiatric Hospitals
  - Chemical Dependency Recovery Hospitals
  - Clinics & Doctor Offices (including behavioral health, surgical)
  - Congregate Living Facilities
  - Residential Substance Use, Mental Health Treatment Facilities

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### Workers

“Workers” refers to all paid and unpaid individuals who work in indoor settings where (1) care is provided to patients, or (2) patients have access for any purpose. This includes workers serving in health care or other health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients of SARS-CoV-2 airborne aerosols. Workers include, but are not limited to, nurses, nursing assistants, physicians, technicians, therapists, phlebotomists, pharmacists, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the health care facility, and persons not directly involved in patient care, but who could be exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted in the health care setting (e.g., clerical, dietary, environmental services, laundry, security, engineering and facilities management, administrative, billing, and volunteer personnel).

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### **Vaccination Verification or COVID-19 Testing Requirements**

Effective August 23, 2021, impacted facilities are required to verify the vaccination status of all workers. Verification may include COVID-19 Vaccination Report Card (issued by the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) or WHO Yellow Card); or documentation of vaccination from a healthcare provider (e.g. vaccination record). Workers who decline to provide proof of vaccination will be considered unvaccinated until proof of vaccination is provided.

Workers who are unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated will be required to submit to COVID-19 testing **once per week** at Other Health Care Facilities and High-Risk Congregate Settings; and **twice per week** at Acute Health Care and Long-Term Care Settings, as defined herein. The once per week testing applies to behavioral health facilities where services are being rendered (this does not include offices where administrative and/or support services are exclusively provided – i.e., administrative offices, call centers with no physical client contact).

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### **Mask Requirements**

Workers must strictly adhere to the current [CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#).

- Workers are required to wear respirators in areas where there are suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19.
  - Cloth face masks and cloth gaiters are not sufficient.
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### Confirmed Vaccination Status Requirement

Workers in impacted facilities are required to be vaccinated for COVID-19, with the dose regimen completed and proof of vaccination by September 30, 2021. Workers may be exempt from the vaccination requirement by requesting an exemption via the online form stating they 1) decline based on Religious Beliefs or 2) are exempt due to Qualifying Medical Reasons.

- Workers may seek an exemption due to an objection to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine based on their sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance.
- The qualified medical reason exemption requires a written statement signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional practicing under the license of a physician stating that the individual qualifies for exemption, and indicate the probable duration of the worker's inability to receive the vaccine (or if duration is unknown/permanent, so indicate).
- While an exemption request is pending or if an exemption is granted, workers are expected to comply with all testing, respirator and mask requirements for unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated individuals.

**Note** – *DBH Specific*: Contact your direct supervisor or DBH-HR for questions on exemptions. For general inquiries regarding test kits and testing, email [DBH-PH21043@dbh.sbcounty.gov](mailto:DBH-PH21043@dbh.sbcounty.gov).

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### Plan & Implementation

Facilities must have a plan and implementation in place for tracking verified worker vaccination status. Records of vaccination must be made available, upon request, to the local health jurisdiction for purposes of investigation.

The facility must provide such records to the local or state Public Health Officer or their designee promptly upon request, and in any event no later than the next business day after receiving the request.

Operators of the facilities subject to the requirement must maintain records pursuant to the CDPH Guidance for Vaccine Records Guidelines & Standards with the following information: (1) full name and date of birth; (2) vaccination manufacturer; and (3) date of vaccine administration (for first dose, and second dose if applicable).

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### Reference(s)

- California Department of Health Care Services
    - Behavioral Health Information Notice [21-03](#) – Requirements for COVID-19 vaccination, verification, masking, and testing of behavioral health facility workers
  - California Department of Public Health
    - Health Care Worker Protections in High Risk Settings, [July 26, 2021](#)
    - Health Care Worker Vaccine Requirement, [August 6, 2021](#)
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