

COVID-19 Health System Updates

August 18, 2021, Wednesday

There has been a lot of vaccine-related news this week, and I want to take a moment to go through it and tell you what it means for us here at Mount Sinai.

Early in the week, news organizations reported that the Biden administration is going to recommend third vaccine doses for everyone who received the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines, starting eight months after the initial vaccination. We are awaiting guidance from federal and state regulators, which may take some time; I will update you when we know more.

We do now have official guidance from the regulators about third doses for immunocompromised people. We'll be emailing details to providers and posting them on our website as soon as we finalize the procedure for offering these doses.

New York State announced this week that it will require all health care workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19, starting on Monday, September 27. As you know, we had already announced a mandate that requires all Mount Sinai faculty and staff to receive at least one vaccine dose by Monday, September 13, and the state announcement doesn't change our plans.

In case you missed the email this morning from Drs. Davis and Charney, here is what you need to do to comply with our vaccine mandate:

- **If you're vaccinated and have already registered with Employee Health Services (EHS)** for a vaccine sticker, you don't need to do anything else.
- **If you are fully or partially vaccinated but have not registered with EHS**, please do so [here](#).
- **If you are not yet vaccinated**, you can make a vaccine appointment at Mount Sinai [here](#), or check the [New York State](#), [New York City](#), [New Jersey](#), or [Connecticut](#) websites for options.

There will be limited exemptions for medical or religious reasons, which you can apply for [here](#). Applications must be submitted by Monday, August 30, and will be reviewed by a committee. The criteria for these exemptions are very narrow, and those who receive exemptions will have to undergo weekly PCR testing to help keep our patients and our Mount Sinai family safe.

All of these links are also available on our [employee vaccine site](#), and if you manage employees who do not use email, please give them or post the attached flyer, which links to that site. (A Spanish version will be available soon.)

Finally, this week marked the start of New York City's vaccine mandate for entertainment venues, gyms, and indoor dining. So getting vaccinated won't just comply with Mount Sinai policy; it will let you enjoy yourself when you're away from work as well.

As of this morning, we had 111 COVID-19-positive inpatients across the system, 28 of whom were in critical care. The New York State seven-day average test positivity rates as of yesterday were 2.6 percent for New York City, 3.9 percent for Long Island, and 3.3 percent for the mid-Hudson region.

The increases in these numbers are making us deal with change and uncertainty yet again. For many of us, our work is more stressful and tiring, and the news about the Delta variant makes us feel more anxious, irritable, or discouraged. We had hoped that the pandemic would soon be behind us; instead, although the numbers are nowhere near where they were during previous waves of the pandemic, the emotions can feel the same.

We all process change and uncertainty differently. There is no right way to cope, but there are some general tips that can help us during these times:

- Remember that you are not alone and that others are having similar feelings. These are tough times, and it is normal to have emotional reactions. Continue to be kind and patient with yourself.
- When you are feeling unwell, reach out to people who you know will be supportive.

- Continue to address your physical wellness whenever possible. Pay attention to your diet, exercise, and sleep.
- And please remember that we are here for you. Make use of the support resources available to you. Click [here](#) for a number of Mount Sinai's well-being and mental health resources.

We got through difficult times in the past, and we will again, by working and coming together as a supportive community. I am proud to wear the Mount Sinai badge alongside all of you, and I know we will make it through this as we have before.

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