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LOCAL NEWS

# Baylor Scott & White says all employees and providers must be vaccinated by Oct. 1

Employees and other members associated with Baylor Scott & White must be fully vaccinated by Oct. 1.

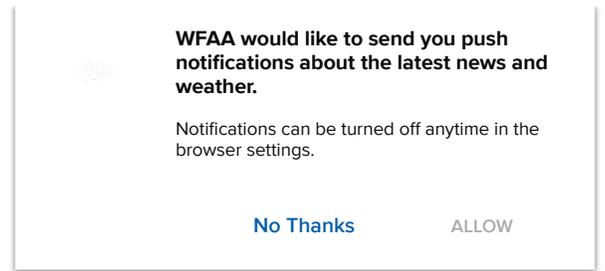
Author: Jay Wallis (WFAA), Tiffany Liou  
Published: 12:19 PM CDT July 28, 2021  
Updated: 6:14 PM CDT July 28, 2021



DALLAS — Baylor Scott & White Health, one of the largest healthcare systems in North Texas, will be mandating that all employees, providers and volunteers get the COVID-19 vaccine, hospital officials announced Wednesday.

Vendors, students and contract staff must also receive both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, or the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, unless granted an exemption.

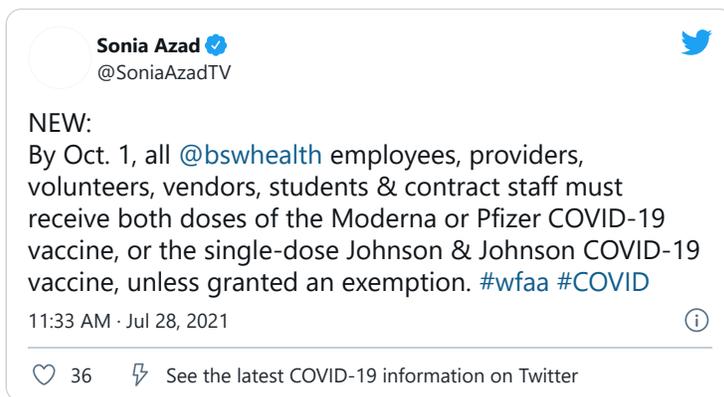




This comes after Dallas County [returned to the orange](#) or "extreme caution" section of its COVID-19 risk level color-coded chart late Friday night, in part due to the ongoing spread of the Delta variant in the area.

"With rapidly rising COVID-19 case counts due to the highly contagious Delta variant and the start of the flu season fast approaching, we believe now is the right time to take the next step in achieving a fully vaccinated workforce," Baylor Scott & White said in a press release Wednesday.

Employees and other members associated with Baylor Scott & White must be fully vaccinated by Oct. 1.



"The Delta variant is the most contagious and dangerous strain we have seen to date, leading to exponentially increasing rates of severe illness and hospitalization," the Baylor Scott & White statement said. "The overwhelming majority of these cases are among the unvaccinated."

Dr. Mark Casanova is with the Dallas County Medical Society. He works at Baylor Scott & White Health. He said doctors "should be setting an example."

"The time was right for Baylor Scott & White to make this move, and I suspect others are likely to follow suit soon," Casanova said, adding that the quickest ticket back to normal is with mass vaccination.

Baylor Scott & White is not the first hospital in Texas to require COVID-19 vaccinations for its employees. On April 1, 2021, Houston Methodist Hospital announced a policy requiring employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by June 7, 2021.

Rogge Dunn, an employment of business attorney in Dallas, has been following the case.

"Houston Methodist required vaccinations a couple of months ago. Some employees quit, rather than take it, and others filed a mass action lawsuit. And they lost the lawsuit," he said.

Baylor Scott & White says all...

Dunn said Texas companies have the right to require vaccinations.

He also said the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a re requires employers to make a safe workplace.

"If the employer isn't requiring mandatory vaccinations, they better be observing social distancing, requiring masks, plastic dividers and those types of things because if they don't, and one employee picks up the phone and calls OSHA, OSHA can be out there investigating and fining that employer," Dunn said.

As of Monday night, the Methodist Health System said it "strongly encourages" people to get the vaccine but would not mandate it. Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital Dallas said Monday it was doing the same.

The Department of Veterans Affairs on Monday [became the first major federal agency](#) to require health care workers to get COVID-19 vaccines.

After the CDC announcing [updated mask mandate guidelines](#) Tuesday, Gov. Greg Abbott's Press Secretary released a statement that said in part:

"Vaccines are the most effective defense against contracting COVID and becoming seriously ill, and we continue to urge all eligible Texans to get the vaccine. The COVID vaccine will always remain voluntary and never forced in Texas."

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