

October 1, 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are thrilled that your teen is interested in working at our youth program In Control. I'm quite sure that they will find it to be a rewarding experience filled with fun, learning, and personal growth.

Before your student commits to this work assignment, we want to be sure you're aware of our new COVID-19 vaccine mandate for all employees that went into effect on October 1, 2021. In accordance with PPCWNY's duty to provide and maintain a workplace that is free of known hazards, we've adopted this policy to safeguard the health of our employees and their families, our patients and visitors, and the community at large from infectious diseases that may be reduced by vaccinations. In making this decision, the executive leadership team reviewed recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and local health officials. In addition, New York State has implemented a vaccine mandate for healthcare organization.

Our vaccine policy requires all employees to be fully vaccinated. New employees are required to have completed their 1<sup>st</sup> dose of the vaccine by their first day of work and must receive their 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccination within 4 weeks of their start date. Individuals seeking an exemption from this requirement for medical exemption should complete a request for accommodation form and submit the form to the human resources department ([hr@ppcwny.org](mailto:hr@ppcwny.org)).

We are here to help you navigate any barriers your family faces in accessing the vaccine. Should you have any questions regarding this policy or your teen's employment, please contact Amy Purcio at [amy.purcio@ppcwny.org](mailto:amy.purcio@ppcwny.org) or call (585) 546-2771, ext. 7781.

Sincerely,

Erin Cabral  
Vice President of Organizational Effectiveness  
Planned Parenthood of Central & Western NY

PS- If vaccination is not an option for your teen, they are still welcome to join us as a participant of our program. See our FAQ document (following pages) for additional information.

**Staff COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs**

- 1. Some hospitals in our region (ECMC, Kaleida Health, URMC, and Crouse) are providing an option for folks to get weekly testing rather than opt in for the vaccine. Why isn't PPCWNY doing this?**

The Delta variant is spreading so quickly amongst people who haven't been vaccinated that weekly testing is not enough to keep up with every exposure. For example, a staff member could be tested on a Monday morning before being exposed to the Delta variant that same evening. In this scenario, it would be possible for that staff member to carry the COVID virus in our facilities for over a week before it is detected. Given the transmissibility and severity of the Delta variant, this represents an unacceptable risk to our staff and those we serve.

- 2. Some staff may feel that vaccination mandates conflict with PPCWNY's core mission to protect the bodily autonomy of all people.**

The safety and health of our staff, patients and community are PPCWNY's core mission. Bodily autonomy is a key part of that - as is public health. As with other vaccinations that are required as a condition of employment at PPCWNY (Measles, Mumps and Rubella, Hepatitis B, Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis, and Meningococcal among other vaccinations) the COVID-19 vaccine mandate is strictly a matter of public health.

- 3. Is asking for a copy of my vaccine card a violation of my HIPAA rights?**

HIPAA rules do not apply to employers or employment records. Employers are permitted to ask employees to provide proof that they have been vaccinated as a condition of employment. All information is kept confidential in an employee medical file. Supervisors will be told which members of their staff have and have not met this condition of employment for management purposes.

- 4. Is it legal to require the COVID-19 vaccine?**

PPCWNY leadership considered many factors when making the decision to mandate COVID-19 vaccines, including the legality of such a mandate. The federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has confirmed that employers may legally mandate the COVID-19 vaccine for employees as long as employers allow employees to request medical exemptions and religious accommodations that may be required under the law. Our policy complies with current regulatory guidance.

- 5. What if I have already had COVID-19, do I need the vaccine?**

Yes. Vaccines are recommended even for people who have had COVID-19. Immunity from natural infection is variable. Vaccine induced immunity appears to be stronger than immunity following a COVID infection, and there is substantial evidence the vaccine provides additional protection for people who have already had the virus.

**6. If I have side effects from the vaccine, do I need to stay home?**

The symptoms of vaccine reactions can be similar to the symptoms of COVID-19. You will not have maximum protection against COVID-19 until 1-2 weeks after the final dose. Low grade fever, headache, muscle pain, pain in the arm, tiredness are all possible side effects. If you experience these in the 2 days immediately following the vaccine, but feel well enough to work, you may do so while maintaining the masking protocol currently in place for unvaccinated staff. If fever or other symptoms persist longer than 48 hours, please call your physician to be evaluated. Cough, loss of taste or smell, or shortness of breath have not been reported after the vaccine and should prompt a call regardless of when they are experienced.

**7. What if I don't get the vaccine?**

Employment: Employees who have not completed their vaccination series by October 1, 2021, unless approved for a medical exemption. After that date, current employees will not be eligible to be schedule to work and their employment will be terminated. If the vaccination status of the individual changes or the mandate lifts, individuals are welcome to apply for open positions.

Newly hired employee must have the 1<sup>st</sup> dose of the vaccine before they start and must receive the 2<sup>nd</sup> shot within 4 weeks of their start date.

If you elect not to get vaccinated, please communicate that with your program manager. While you would not be eligible for employment, you may still be eligible to participate in group activities, as a non-employee.

**8. What would be considered a medical exemption?**

Requests for medical exemptions will require documentation from a healthcare provider. Other exemptions or needs for accommodations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. All reasonable accommodations will be handled with utmost confidentiality, as are all reasonable accommodation requests at PPCWNY.

**9. Who should I reach out to with questions?**

Please reach out to Amy Purcio, Director of Human Resources at (585) 546-2771, ext. 7781 or [amy.purcio@ppcwny.org](mailto:amy.purcio@ppcwny.org).