Fitzgerald Announces COVID Vaccines Required for All County Employees
Unvaccinated Employees Have Until December 1 to Comply with Policy

PITTSBURGH – County Executive Rich Fitzgerald today announced that COVID-19 vaccinations will be required of all county employees under the executive branch, subject to such exceptions as required by law. The measure is being taken to promote the health and safety of the county workforce, and to ensure the continued protection of the public with whom the workforce interacts and communities they serve.

“As we continue to see cases of COVID in our county, and different populations being affected than were previously, it is even more important that our workforce be protected so that the public that we serve is protected as well,” said Fitzgerald. “The CDC, the FDA, the PA Department of Health, the county Health Department and even the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) are in agreement that vaccines are highly effective at protecting most fully vaccinated people against symptoms and severe disease from COVID. This is the right thing for our county and our workforce.”

Employees will have until December 1, 2021 to provide proof of vaccination to department management. While employees do not have to be considered fully vaccinated (defined by the CDC as two weeks following the first dose of Janssen or second dose of Pfizer or Moderna) by December 1, they will have to have received the one-shot Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine, or received the second dose of the two-shot Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna vaccine, on or before December 1.

Vaccinated employees who still get COVID or have been ordered or directed to quarantine will also have an additional benefit of being provided 10 days of paid leave. The leave is applicable only for the affected vaccinated employee.

From the beginning of the pandemic, the county has worked to halt the spread of coronavirus disease and, most recently, the Delta variant. It has relied on the best available data and science-based public health measures. The Delta variant, currently the predominant variant of the virus in the United States, is highly contagious and has led to a rapid rise in cases and hospitalizations.

That continues to be the case locally as well. In the past few days, new daily cases of COVID have numbered in the 400s for county residents. To date, there have been 120,573 cases, 8,126 hospitalizations and 2,160 deaths.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that the best way to slow the spread of the virus, and to prevent infection by the Delta variant or other variants, is to be vaccinated. COVID-19 vaccines are widely available in the United States, and in Allegheny County. Data on the vaccines show that they protect people from getting infected and severely ill, and significantly reduce the likelihood of hospitalization and death.

One of the vaccines, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (now known as Comirnaty) has received full approval from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Two other vaccines, Moderna and Janssen, have been authorized by the FDA for emergency use. All three vaccines have met the rigorous standards for safety, effectiveness and manufacturing quality.
According to the PA Department of Health’s Vaccine Dashboard, Allegheny County currently ranks fifth in the state with the percent of residents with at least one vaccine dose. As of today, 718,178 residents are fully covered. An additional 68,462 residents have received at least one dose in a two dose vaccine series. Another 14,524 people have also availed themselves of a Pfizer-BioNTech booster.

The health and safety of the county workforce, and the health and safety of the members of the public with whom they interact, are integral parts of the services provided to residents. To ensure that the county can continue to meet the needs of residents and provide critical services, county employees must take all available steps to protect themselves and avoid spreading COVID-19 to their co-workers and members of the public.

All employees are being notified of the new policy today. Those employees who have not yet provided proof of vaccination will also receive additional details provided to them by their supervisor. Information will also be sent to impacted employees at their home regarding how to comply with the new policy. Beginning on December 2, anyone in violation of the requirement who does not meet any exception will face termination.

This announcement follows on the heels of the decision in early August to require all new hires to vaccinated and to require current employees who are unvaccinated to wear masks and be tested regularly for COVID. Based on data from the Department of Human Resources, over 75% of employees under the executive branch have been vaccinated with over 700 employees receiving vaccination following the August announcement.

Applicability of the new policy to non-executive branch employees will be up to the leadership of those respective offices. These include the Courts, County Council and the independently elected offices of the Controller, District Attorney, Sheriff, and Treasurer.

# # #

Office of County Executive Rich Fitzgerald
101 Courthouse │ 436 Grant Street │ Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Phone: 412-350-6500 │ Fax: 412-350-6512
www.alleghenycounty.us

Follow us: allegheny alerts | facebook | instagram | linkedin | twitter | youtube