[Letter\_Date]

[Employee\_Full\_Name]

C/- Ruah Community Services

**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

Dear [Pref\_Name]

**MANDATORY VACCINATIONS FOR STAFF WORKING OR ATTENDING HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

We are writing to you about the new direction from the Health Minister regarding mandatory vaccinations for workers who visit health care facilities. As your position, or part of your role, is to work at or visit clients in or facilitate clients to a health care facility, we have identified that you are affected by this Government mandate.

Your vaccination requirements are as follows in order to continue to be able to perform the duties of your position, with further information contained in the Attachment to this letter to assist you.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tier** | **Worker Type** | **1st Dose by** | **Fully vaccinated by** |
| [Tier\_X] | Health Care Worker | [Date1] | [Date2] |

**What you need to do**

In order for Ruah to ensure that staff are working in accordance with this Health Direction, please by [Date3]:

1. Provide a copy of your COVID Vaccination evidence to hr@ruah.org.au, which can include:
* A copy of your Immunisation History Statement (available through Medicare);
* A copy of your COVID-19 digital vaccination certificate (available through your MyGov or Medicare); or
* Written confirmation issued by the Department of Health of the COVID-19 vaccination received by you.

**OR**

1. Provide documentation of medical exemption in accordance with the Directions, such as a copy of your Immunisation History Statement displaying your exemption status (available through Medicare).

The Health Worker (Restrictions on Access) Directions provide exemptions for certain categories of employees, which include medical exemptions and other temporary exemptions. Vaccination exemption criteria is available from the [Department](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/~/media/Corp/Documents/Health-for/Infectious-disease/COVID19/Vaccination/Directions/COVID19-Health-Worker-Exemption-Guidelines.pdf) of Health.

**Where you are unvaccinated**

We fully acknowledge that the topic of mandatory vaccinations is a contentious one in the community. While Ruah and each of us must follow the Government’s health instructions, Ruah wants to ensure you are supported in meeting your obligations.

Where you have not provided Ruah with the evidence and/or documentation by the indicated dates in this letter, Ruah may be required to place you on an unpaid suspension pending a review of your employment circumstances and options.

**Further information**

For staff who have questions about these requirements, please speak with your supervisor or contact Shaun Williams, General Manager People and Culture (shaun.williams@ruah.org.au or 0421 867 519) to discuss.

A further useful information source includes the [WA Department of Health FAQs page](https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-vaccination-program/Directions-for-healthcare-and-health-support-workers/FAQ).

Yours faithfully,

**Deb Zanella**

**Chief Executive Officer**

*Att – Supplementary Department of Health Information*

**ATTACHMENT – SUPPLEMENTARY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INFORMATION**

**Health Worker Differences**

***‘Health care workers'*** include those who provide heath, medical, nursing, pathology, pharmaceutical, social work or allied health services to a patient at a health care facility in any capacity; students on placement; and ambulance officers.

This applies to paid and voluntary workers, including agency staff working onsite; administrative staff; ancillary staff including cleaners, laundry staff, gardeners, food preparation services, security officers and maintenance services; providers of lifestyle and social care, eg music or art therapy and people providing commercial activities at health care facilities.

***'Health support workers'*** include those who provide goods or services at a health care facility.

The full Direction can be accessed [here](https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/Health-Worker-Restrictions-on-Access-Directions.pdf) and is attached to this letter.

**Tier and Timeline Detail**

The following table details the timeline requirements set out by the Department of Health.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Tier** | **Worker Type** | **1st Dose by** | **Fully Vaccinated by** |
| **Tier 1** | Health Care Worker |  | 1 November 2021 |
| Health Support Worker |  |
| **Tier 2** | Health Care Worker | 1 November 2021 | 1 December 2021 |
| Health Support Worker | 1 December 2021 | 1 January 2022 |
| **Tier 3** | Health Care Worker | 1 December 2021 | 1 January 2022 |
| Health Support Worker |

**Tier one** health care facility means:

1. an intensive care unit within a hospital; or
2. a high dependency unit within a hospital; or
3. a respiratory ward within a hospital; or
4. a ward within a high risk regional hospital that has one or more designated respiratory beds; or
5. an emergency department within a hospital; or
6. a COVID clinic; or
7. a COVID-19 vaccination community clinic; or
8. a regional COVID-19 vaccination clinic; or
9. any other facility that is specified to be a tier one health care facility by the Chief Health Officer in writing or any person authorised by him for that purpose.

**Tier two** health care facility means:

1. a hospital, including any ancillary facilities located on the land on which the hospital is located and the land itself; or
2. any other facility that is specified to be a tier two health care facility by the Chief Health Officer in writing or any person authorised by him for that purpose.

**Tier three** health care facility means:

1. a public health service facility, including ancillary facilities and facilities that provide support services, and including any vehicle from which public health services are provided, and any land on which any building comprising a public health service facility is located; or
2. any premises that are occupied by the Department of Health or a health service provider; or
3. any other facility that is specified to be a tier three health care facility by the Chief Health Officer in writing or any person authorised by him for that purpose.

**Offences and Fines**

It is an offence for a person to fail, without reasonable excuse, to comply with any of these directions, punishable by a fine of up to $20,000 for individuals and $100,000 for bodies corporate.

**Medical Exemptions**

Medical exemptions mean a medical exemption recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register and displayed on an individual’s Immunisation History Statement. This may be a temporary or a permanent medical exemption. Not every health professional can grant a medical exemption. Health professionals who can grant an exemption are:

* General practice registrars on an approved 3GA training placement
* Paediatricians
* Public health physicians
* Infectious disease physicians
* Clinical immunologists
* GPs who meet certain criteria.

GPs need to be one of the following:

* Vocationally registered
* A fellow of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
* A fellow of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)

Your GP will know if they can grant an exemption. To grant an exemption, they must update the Australian Immunisation Register or complete a form.

There are limited reasons you might be able to get a medical exemption from having a vaccine including if you:

* had anaphylaxis after a previous dose of a vaccine
* had anaphylaxis after a dose of any component of a vaccine
* are significantly immunocompromised – for live vaccines only (NB: COVID-19 vaccines are not live vaccines).

Medical exemptions are currently available for pregnant women. However, RANZCOG and ATAGI recommend that pregnant women are routinely offered the Pfizer vaccine (Comirnarty) at any stage of pregnancy. This is because the risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 is significantly higher for pregnant women and their unborn baby. Further information is available at Joint statement between RANZCOG and ATAGI about COVID-19 vaccination for pregnant women | Australian Government Department of Health.

As confirmed in the joint statement, “women who are trying to become pregnant do not need to delay vaccination or avoid becoming pregnant after vaccination”. This also applies to breastfeeding women. You may find this information useful: COVID-19 vaccination decision guide for women who are pregnant, breastfeeding, or planning pregnancy (health.gov.au).

Please note that the Chief Health Officer is able to grant temporary or permanent exemptions in rare circumstances where a medical exemption cannot be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register but an expert or experts approved by the Chief Health Officer have provided advice about the need for an exemption.

If you are in the process of applying for a medical exemption but that process is not yet complete, you may be able to apply for a temporary exemption.

Medical exemption information can be viewed [here](https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/COVID19-Health-Worker-Exemption-Guidelines.pdf).

**Evidence**

The following forms of evidence as evidence that must be produced by a health care worker or a health support worker that they have been vaccinated against COVID-19 for the purposes of paragraph 8 of the Directions:

* written confirmation issued by the Department of Health to the health care worker or health support worker of the COVID-19 vaccination received by them; or
* a COVID-19 digital vaccination certificate or an immunisation history statement issued to the health care worker or health support worker by Medicare showing the COVID-19 vaccination recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register for that health care worker or health support worker.

The approved evidence authority by the Chief Health Officer can be viewed [here](https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-09/CHO-form-of-Ev2.pdf).