

Coronavirus Update – 8 October 2021

Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination for Healthcare Workers

South Australia

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, on 7 October 2021 the South Australian Government issued the *Emergency Management (COVID-19) (Healthcare Setting Workers Vaccination) Direction 2021 (Directions)* which mandates vaccination against COVID-19 in public hospitals, private hospitals and ambulance services (**healthcare settings**).

The Directions do not, at the date of writing, apply to private or public dental practices, however the South Australian Government has stated it intends to issue further orders which may extend to dental practices. A further alert will be issued if this occurs.

What do the Directions say?

The Directions provide that a person must not engage in work or perform duties in a healthcare setting from 1 November 2021 unless:

- a) the person has received at least one dose of a Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved COVID-19 vaccine; and
- b) the person has received, or has evidence of a booking to receive, a second dose of a TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine within one month of the first dose.

Who do the Directions apply to?

The Directions applies to all persons engaging in work or duties at a healthcare setting including clinicians, ambulance workers, allied health workers, cleaners, administrative and executive staff and students undertaking placement, regardless of whether they work in a patient or a non-patient area. This means that any dental professionals or workers performing work in public hospitals or private hospitals must comply with the Directions.

A person subject to the Directions must provide the operator of the healthcare setting with proof of their vaccination status upon request.

Exceptions

A person may, however, continue to engage in work or perform duties at a healthcare setting if:

- a) the person has a medical certificate from a legally qualified medical practitioner certifying that the person has a medical exemption from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine on either a permanent or temporary basis in accordance with the guidelines published from time to time by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI); and
- b) the certificate specifies the nature of the exemption and the basis on which it applies; and
- c) the Chief Public Health Officer or her delegate has endorsed the exemption; and
- d) the person provides the operator of the healthcare setting with a copy of the endorsement provided under paragraph (c).

Next Steps

Dental professionals affected by the Directions have until 1 November 2021 to either:

- a) be fully vaccinated against COVID-19; or,
- b) be partially vaccinated against COVID-19 and have evidence of a booking to receive a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination.

Such workers should take steps to ensure compliance with the Directions before 1 November 2021. Workers who fail to comply with the Directions will not be permitted to attend work from 1 November 2021 (unless an exception applies).

Please note this article applies only to the defined healthcare settings and does not apply more broadly to dental practices in South Australia. The information in this article is correct at the time of writing but is subject to change.

If you have any questions about mandatory vaccinations or the content of this article, please contact the ADA HR Advisory Service on 1300 232 462.