



NEW YORK STATE
Unified Court System

OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

TAMIKO A. AMAKER
ACTING CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE



NANCY J. BARRY, ESQ.
CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

JUSTIN A. BARRY, ESQ.
CHIEF OF ADMINISTRATION

M E M O R A N D U M

February 15, 2023

To: All UCS Judges, Justices and Non-Judicial Personnel

From: Nancy Barry 
Justin Barry 

Re: COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Mandate Discontinued

Effective February 17, 2023, COVID-19 vaccinations will be optional for all current, new, and prospective judges and employees of the Unified Court System. Likewise, weekly testing for unvaccinated judges and employees who received exemptions to the vaccination requirement will be discontinued.

The UCS COVID-19 Safety and Operational Protocols will continue to require isolation and quarantine in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines, and masks must still be worn by individuals returning after a COVID-19 infection or who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (see COVID-19 Safety and Operational Protocols for details). Reporting of a COVID-19 diagnosis will also continue to be required so that individuals in close contact can take appropriate precautions.

Simultaneous with this change in policy, employees seeking to have COVID-qualifying absences covered by (paid) Leave for Quarantine will be required to submit documentation from a healthcare provider or public health official, directing that the employee quarantine or isolate for "x" number of days, along with their application. Copies of positive test results, alone, will no longer be accepted for purposes of this paid leave benefit.

As an incentive to stay current on the recommended COVID booster regimen, the UCS will continue to offer 3½ hours of compensatory time to employees submitting proof of each COVID booster vaccination received outside of work hours.

As supplies last, the Department of Public Safety will continue to issue personal protective equipment to those districts requesting them.

Starting February 17, 2023, former employees terminated for failure to comply with the vaccination mandate may submit a request for reinstatement to reapply for their former positions. These requests will be reviewed and decided according to existing policies and rules.

Background

On January 30, 2023, the Biden administration announced that it would end the COVID-19 national emergency in May 2023, indicating that the reason for the months-long notice was to allow for an orderly transition out of the emergency in healthcare settings. This announcement comports with the latest CDC guidance stating that high levels of vaccine- and infection-induced immunity and the availability of effective treatments and prevention tools have substantially reduced the risk of medically significant illness and associated hospitalization and death. The CDC also indicates that effective therapeutics are now available for those infected persons at highest risk for severe illness.

Within the court system, 95% of all judges and staff have been fully vaccinated for COVID-19. This incredible accomplishment allowed our courts to continue functioning throughout the worst days of the pandemic and protected our judges and employees and all those who work in our busy buildings, as well as those who came to our courts seeking justice. Since the outset of the pandemic, we have been committed to following the guidance of public health officials and modifying our policies, as necessary. With the vast majority of judges and employees vaccinated and the tools readily available to protect from serious illness, the UCS can now adjust our response, although we continue to encourage everyone that works and visits our buildings to follow vaccination/booster recommendations, wear masks when appropriate, test when needed, and stay home when sick.

We take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to our judges and employees who kept our vital systems operating over the past three years. Your work brought justice to New Yorkers despite extraordinarily challenging times, and your commitment to safety undoubtedly stanching the spread of the virus and saved lives.