

Governor Pritzker Continues Effort To Ramp Down COVID-19 Requirements With Updated Executive Order

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CHICAGO — As part of his continuing plan to carefully unwind the state's COVID-19 executive orders, Governor Pritzker today updating vaccine and testing requirements in some industries. The updated executive order amends testing requirements for some unvaccinated health care employees and removes mandates for some other industries.



Among the provisions that have been lifted in past months, Governor Pritzker has reduced requirements for school exclusion, removed provisions relating to setting up alternative care facilities, returned to non-emergency hospital oversight by removing several provisions and restarted normal jail-to-prison transfers. Other changes included lifting provisions in an effort to ensure governments are resuming normal operations. The Governor continues to maintain all provisions necessary for the health and safety of the people of Illinois, as well as all provisions in disaster proclamations that enable the state to recoup the maximum available from the federal government.

“Vaccination continues to be the number one tool we have to fight COVID-19, and I’m proud that so many Illinoisans have taken advantage of this life-saving tool,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “I continue to urge all Illinoisans to make sure they’re up to date on their COVID-19 vaccine to ensure the most at-risk populations and those unable to be vaccinated are protected from the serious side effects of this disease. As we continue to move toward living with this virus, my administration will relax some requirements while continuing to protect the most vulnerable and ensuring we can get every federal dollar our residents are eligible to receive.”

Currently, Illinois requires at least weekly testing of health care staff who are unvaccinated. Under the updated requirements, long-term care facilities with the most vulnerable residents, including skilled nursing homes, will now test staff who are not up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine weekly if located in an area of moderate community level transmission and twice weekly in areas of substantial or high community level transmission, as recommended by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Unvaccinated staff at hospitals and other healthcare facilities that are certified by CMS will now be required to test weekly only if located in areas of high community-level transmission.

Vaccine mandates for higher education employees and students and emergency medical service providers will not be reissued. Vaccination mandates will remain in place in K-12 schools, daycares, state-run 24/7 congregate care facilities, and any health care facilities not covered under the federal CMS vaccine mandate (including independent doctors’ offices, dental offices, urgent care facilities, and outpatient facilities).

“We continue to remind everyone in Illinois that the most important step they can take to protect themselves, their loved ones and friends and colleagues is to remain up-to-date on vaccinations and booster shots,” said Acting IDPH Director Amaal Tokars. “This is especially important for those who are vulnerable to serious outcomes. We urge everyone to take advantage of the current availability of vaccines for the sake of their children, as well as getting up-to-date as a parent, guardian or grandparent.”

“The Illinois hospital community appreciates the Governor’s actions today limiting the COVID-19 testing mandate for healthcare workers to high transmission counties,” said A.J. Wilhelmi, President and CEO of the Illinois Health and Hospital Association. “This Order will help hospitals maximize the use of resources for patient care, while simultaneously continuing to operate with reasonable and effective infection controls to remain safe places for patients, visitors and healthcare workers.”

“We are grateful to the Governor for his leadership throughout the pandemic. As we move into this next phase, we are building on the success of our campus leaders, staff, faculty, and students over the past two years in keeping our campuses safe, while keeping students on their path to credentials and degrees, especially our students of color and low-income students who were most impacted,” said Ginger Ostro, Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

“The COVID-19 vaccines protect us from developing severe illness,” said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Carmen I. Ayala. “The requirement for school personnel to get vaccinated or test weekly ensures that students, families, and educators across Illinois can go to school with confidence in their health and safety.”

"We support Governor Pritzker's Executive Order because it will ensure that children, teachers, staff and our communities stay safe and healthy," said Illinois Federation of Teachers President Dan Montgomery. "His leadership ensured that we ended the last school year with a successful vaccination model, which sets us up for the upcoming school year so we can keep our school buildings open and everyone in them healthy."

“We know the best place for students, and those who teach and care for them, is in the classroom and in school buildings. We are looking forward to the start of this school year,” said Illinois Education Association President Kathi Griffin.

School and daycare-aged children have much lower rates of vaccination than the general public and have less ability to consistently and safely mask. In addition, outbreaks at schools threaten the ability to continue with in-person learning and the developmental benefits it provides.

To find a COVID-19 vaccination site near you, including for children ages six months to four years, visit <https://www.vaccines.gov/>.