



Memo

To: Commissioners, First 5 Ventura County

From: Lauren Arzu, on behalf of the Administration and Finance Committee

Date: October 20, 2022

Re: Recommendation to Update Employee Handbook to Remove Vaccinate or Test Requirement

Background

In an effort to follow best practices related to the coronavirus and help protect families with young children, First 5 Ventura County (F5VC) has required staff to be vaccinated against the coronavirus or get tested weekly since November, 2021. In March 2022, the Commission added a booster requirement to be considered fully vaccinated. 97% of current F5VC staff are vaccinated and boosted.

In July 2022, the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) said employers must show that coronavirus testing is job-related and consistent with business necessity. When young children were not eligible for vaccination, having staff vaccinated or testing regularly improved the safety of working in person with the families we serve. Now vaccines are available for children 6 months and older. F5VC is partnering with local organizations to promote vaccination among young children, including participating in vaccine clinics and parent education events.

The federal government is no longer requiring unvaccinated employees to test, and the CDC no longer recommends quarantine for unvaccinated individuals who have been exposed to coronavirus but are asymptomatic. K-12 school staff in California are no longer required to vaccinate or test. Weekly testing of unvaccinated persons is no longer slowing the spread as it did earlier in the pandemic.

Locally, early childhood organizations (including licensed childcare) have either dropped their vaccinate or test requirement, or have never required vaccination or regular testing for their staff.

As free tests become more difficult to access and vaccinations become more readily available, staff recommends that the requirement to be fully vaccinated/boosted or test weekly be removed from the employee handbook. All F5VC employees are strongly encouraged to obtain Covid 19 vaccine and boosters.

This recommendation has been removed and approved by the Administration and Finance Committee.

Recommendation

The recommendation is to remove the "Covid-19 Staff Vaccination Requirement Policy" section from the handbook, effective 10/24/2022.

Proposed Deletion:

Covid-19 Staff Vaccination Requirement Policy

Effective March 11, 2022, First 5 Ventura County staff are required to be fully vaccinated and boosted* or submit to weekly coronavirus testing (PCR molecular or antigen). Vaccination records are maintained in confidential employee files. Un-vaccinated employees will need to submit test results weekly. Unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated/unboosted and boosted employees must also observe all other infection control requirements and are not exempted from the testing requirement even if they have a medical contraindication to vaccination, since they are still potentially able to spread the illness. Previous history of COVID-19 from which the individual recovered more than 90 days earlier, or a previous positive antibody test for COVID-19, does not waive this requirement for testing. *Fully vaccinated is at least 14 days from the final vaccination dose, as recommended by the manufacturer. Boosted is one additional dose, or as recommended by the CDC.