

Date: June 9, 2021

From: Acting Under Secretary for Health (10)

Subj: Authorization for VHA travel

To: Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Employees

1. This memorandum replaces guidance provided on Mission Critical Travel last updated on April 19, 2021. The expansion of VHA-sponsored travel will start with staff who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Employees will be asked to voluntarily attest to receiving the vaccine or authorize in writing VHA Employee/Occupational Health to disclose fully vaccinated status to their supervisor. Vaccination status provided by the employee or VHA Employee/Occupational Health is for one-time use and must be discarded after meeting the requirement to travel.
2. The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) released guidance for persons fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including requirements for masking, physical distancing, and travel. The guidance for masking and physical distancing drops both requirements for fully vaccinated persons in *non-healthcare settings*, while travel requirements call for less COVID-19 testing and self-quarantine for domestic and some international travel.
3. Senior executive staff and their designees may now authorize travel for VHA employees fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to restart mandatory program inspections, conduct face-to-face meetings that align with VHA priorities, and to support staff speaking engagements and continuing education. VHACO, VISN, and facility leaders are encouraged to support travel that meet risk mitigation strategies:
  - a. Travel does not place undue burden on the host facility.
  - b. Meeting location is to a non-healthcare setting where possible.
  - c. Manageable host location COVID-19 burden (cases and/or test positivity rate).
4. VHA employees must follow local, state and federal guidance for COVID-19 mitigation strategies while on travel and meet any requirements for testing and self-quarantine.
5. Senior executives may exempt the requirement for full vaccination prior to travel if the travel is mission critical, the employee is exempt from vaccination for religious or medical reasons, or no other employee can travel in their place to complete the necessary functions. In such cases, the not-fully-vaccinated employee must follow the current CDC recommendations for masking and physical distancing for unvaccinated persons. CDC guidance continues to change and can be found on the [CDC's fully vaccinated website](#).



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