



Montgomery County Commission on Health

**Testimony in Support of Expedited Bill 34-21
Personnel and Human Resources - COVID-19 Vaccination Required
Tuesday, October 19, 2021**

To: Members of the Montgomery County Council
From: The Montgomery County Commission on Health

The Montgomery County Commission on Health (COH) strongly supports the passage of Bill 34-21, introduced to require County employees be vaccinated against the coronavirus, with no option to have frequent testing as an alternative except in the event of a medical accommodation.

Public health officials have long advocated for vaccination as their best tool against the pandemic, and more governments and private employers are issuing mandates requiring their employees to get vaccinated.¹ The Montgomery County Public School system has wisely decided to require its entire staff to be vaccinated, even those not directly working with students.²

There is no controversy regarding the efficacy and safety of vaccinations, which has been proven since late 2020.^{3,4} We know that an unvaccinated person is 11 times more likely to die of Covid than someone who is vaccinated.⁵

County leadership has rightly touted the high level of vaccination of our residents, among whom the vaccination rate is 90%.⁶ Yet only 75% of County employees are known to have been vaccinated.⁷ Roughly a third of the County's 10,000 employees, including first responders have at some point missed work because of contracting the virus or being exposed to it. Sadly, five county employees have died, and about 140 are currently quarantined, having tested positive or awaiting test results.⁸

County residents and employees deserve to live and work in the safest possible environment, and it is incumbent on County leadership to do everything possible to protect County employees, and its residents, from a lethal and highly communicable disease. The COH asks that you support Bill 34-21 to ensure that we continue to protect the County residents and help save lives.

¹ The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/montgomery-county-covid-vaccines-employees/2021/08/25/5a32bc28-05c8-11ec-8c3f-3526f81b233b_story.html

² Montgomery County Public Schools <https://news.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/staff-bulletin/covid-19-vaccinations-required-for-all-mcps-employees/>

³ The New England Journal of Medicine. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/nejmoa2035389>

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety.html>

⁵ The BMJ. <https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n2282>

⁶ Montgomery County Government

https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=36644

⁷ Montgomery County Government. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/data/case-counts.html#mcg-vaccinations>

⁸ The Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/10/04/montgomery-county-maryland-covid-vaccine-mandate/>