

Date: **SEP 14 2021**

From: Medical Center Director (629/00)

Subj: VA COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Notification Unpaid Associated Health Trainees

To: Dean or Equivalent Responsible Official of the Educational Institution or Program
Thru: Chief of Staff (629/11)
Designated Education Officer (629/11B)

1. Effective August 13, 2021, Recertified Veterans Health Administration (VHA) directive 1193, Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination Program for Veterans Health Administration Health Care Personnel requires all VHA Health Care Personnel (HCP) to receive a complete COVID-19 vaccine series (unless exempt from vaccination for medical or religious reasons) within eight (8) weeks of publication of the directive. All VHA healthcare personnel (to include volunteers, trainees, and contractors) who work in or visit VHA facilities and have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials are included. In an effort to prioritize Veteran safety while preserving the educational mission of the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System (SLVHCS) will require all students/ trainees to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

2. All trainees rotating through SLVHCS will be required to be vaccinated prior to October 7, 2021. A signed attestation from the affiliate school will be needed to confirm the vaccination status of all trainees listed on the Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL). It is the responsibility of the affiliate university to confirm vaccination status and maintain compliance. The signed attestation from the affiliate must be received by the SLVHCS Designated Education Officer (DEO) office prior to October 7, 2021.

3. Students that are unvaccinated by October 7, 2021, may submit a COVID-19 vaccination VA form 10-263 waiver for consideration. Medical exemptions must be signed by a treating physician and will be reviewed and approved by VA occupational health. Approved COVID-19 vaccination waivers will require minimum weekly COVID-19 testing. In an effort to keep our Veterans safe with the emergence of the Delta variant, unvaccinated students with approved waivers will be allowed to rotate when all of the following criteria are met:

- a) The COVID-19 transmission rate in the community is low and
- b) SLVHCS has adequate COVID-19 testing supplies to screen students weekly for COVID-19 and
- c) The SLVHCS Pandemic Clinical Advisory Workgroup (PCAW) has reviewed the above criteria and has authorized unvaccinated students to rotate.

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4. Given the 4th COVID-19 surge, our facility does not currently meet criteria for unvaccinated trainees to rotate at this time; however, we will keep open lines of communication and notify the affiliate when conditions improve.

5. If you should have any questions or need additional information, please contact Irene Grundy, M.D., Designated Education Officer at 504-507-8806.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fernando O. Rivera'.

Fernando O. Rivera, FACHE
SLVHCS Medical Center Director

Attachment

