



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on September 27, 2021

NY Braces for Shortages of Medical Workers, Will Not Provide Unemployment Insurance for Unvaxxed

In a desperate and, some would say, cruel move to prevent the devastating staffing shortages mounting over the New York healthcare system, the state's top officials decided to threaten the once-celebrated workers who have not gotten the COVID shot with making them ineligible for unemployment insurance (UI).

In a [statement](#) released on Saturday, New York Governor Kathy Hochul indicated the following:

Workers who are terminated because of refusal to be vaccinated are not eligible for unemployment insurance absent a valid doctor-approved request for medical accommodation.



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The decision comes with an updated [guidance](#) on the unemployment insurance issued by the New York Department of Labor that states that eligibility for UI “will depend on the circumstances as each claim is unique and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.” But, in general, the rule is now this:

Workers in a healthcare facility, nursing home, or school who voluntarily quit or are terminated for refusing an employer-mandated vaccination will be ineligible for UI absent a valid request for accommodation because these are workplaces where an employer has a compelling interest in such a mandate, especially if they already require other immunizations.

The department does not distinguish between the immunization requirements with the vaccines that have been extensively tested and used for decades and the experimental gene therapeutics, aka Covid vaccines, that are, [in fact](#), not as safe and not as effective in preventing one from getting COVID or spreading it to others.

The rule will also apply to all public employees subjected to a local government mandate to submit proof of vaccination or negative testing. Such employees may be disqualified from the receipt of UI if they refuse to comply. The department provides that if a person's work has no public exposure, and they have “a compelling reason” for refusing to comply with the directive, they may be eligible for UI.

New York's [mandate](#) requires healthcare workers at hospitals and long-term care facilities (LTCF), including nursing homes, adult care, and other congregate care settings, to receive their first vaccine dose by September 27. Staff at [additional](#) medical entities, including diagnostic and treatment centers, home-health agencies, long-term home healthcare programs, school-based clinics, and hospice care



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programs, must have at least one dose by October 7.

New York's vaccine mandate does not provide for religious exemptions to COVID vaccination — an issue that is currently being [legally challenged](#) by numerous medical workers.

Hochul's statement specifies that as of September 22, 84 percent of all hospital employees in New York State were fully vaccinated. As of September 23, 81 percent of staff at all adult-care facilities and 77 percent of all staff at nursing home facilities were also safe from termination.

The numbers translate into some [72,000](#) hospital workers facing termination over their health choice. According to a local media [report](#), there are also tens of thousands of unvaccinated staffers at nursing homes and other select medical fields who are expected to be fired because of the draconian mandate.

In preparation for the staff shortages, the freshmen governor prepares to call on the feds to deploy medically trained National Guard members, as well as Disaster Medical Assistance Teams (DMATs).

Another option to tackle the staff shortage, per Hochul, is to allow anyone who has a license in another state, or even another country, to take medical care of New Yorkers. Recent graduates, retired, and formerly practicing healthcare professionals would also be eagerly hired by the state in place of those stubborn "anti-vaxxers."

As *The New American* has previously [reported](#), workforce shortages have already impacted the healthcare services in the Empire State. Republican New York State Assembly members sent a [letter](#) to Governor Hochul and state Health Commissioner Howard Zucker warning that the vaccine mandate could cost the healthcare system up to a quarter of its workforce, which the lawmakers said would be a "devastating blow."

On September 1, 10 New York County Health Departments also penned a [letter](#) to Governor Hochul to discuss the "unintended consequences of the vaccine mandate," noting that some of the local hospitals and nursing homes would have to reduce their bed capacity by as much as "one third or more" if the currently unvaccinated workers resign.

Instead of reversing the mandate or even providing for the reasonable accommodations for those medical professionals who chose to opt out from the vaccination, Hochul evidently decided to threaten them with the loss of money they would need to provide for their families while between jobs. So much for admiring "our heroic frontline workers"!

The updated regulation also applies to some [10,000](#) teachers and nearly 20,000 other education department employees who either did not receive COVID jabs or have not attested to their vaccination status. For now, they are safe from termination since a federal judge temporarily [blocked](#) the mandate and scheduled a hearing on the dispute for Wednesday, following a request by the city for an expedited hearing. A resolution of the pressing case is expected by the end of the week.

According to the [Forbes](#), staff shortages are already "hammering long-term care facilities, home care agencies, and families" across the nation, and the vaccine mandate is one of the major factors that drives much-needed professionals away.



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