



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on August 27, 2021

Illinois Governor Mandates Vaccine for Teachers, College Students, Healthcare Workers

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker on Thursday [announced](#) a statewide vaccine mandate for all teachers and staff for pre-kindergarten through college, as well as for healthcare workers and college students. The mandate also imposes masks in any indoor place for everyone over the age of two, regardless of vaccination status.

Pritzker cited an alleged uptick in COVID-19 hospitalizations as justification for his executive order. “Unfortunately, we are running out of time as our hospitals run out of beds,” the Democrat governor said.

Health experts, he maintained, “fear the worst is yet to come for us, to put it bluntly. Because of the delta variant, hospitals are again fighting the battle that we had hoped would be behind us by now.”

Pritzker has made his response to the COVID-19 outbreak one of his signature issues, which he is touting as he prepares for reelection in 2022. The first-term governor has reiterated calls for mass vaccination in light of the FDA’s approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech shot this week.

“Vaccination remains our strongest tool to protect ourselves and our loved ones to restore post-pandemic life to our communities and, most crucially, to maintain our healthcare system’s ability to care for anyone who walks through their doors that needs help,” Pritzker stated.

Like many advocates of the injection, Pritzker put the blame for the ostensible rise in numbers on the shoulders of the unvaccinated.

“My number one concern is, right now, keeping our healthcare system available, not just for people who may get COVID-19. But for people who have other problems that would take them to the hospital,” he said. “You don’t need to be an epidemiologist to understand what’s going on here. This is a pandemic of the unvaccinated.”

Those who do not get the vaccine under the new executive order will be required to get a COVID-19 test once per week beginning September 5.

But in many cases, hospital systems are not giving workers an option to test weekly in place of inoculation. Advocate Aurora Health, University of Chicago Medical Center, Edward-Elmhurst Health, and Sinai Chicago have said that workers who don’t get vaccinated could lose their jobs.

Northwestern Medicine said Wednesday it would require its workers to either get the shot or be tested weekly until January 1, after which weekly testing will cease to be an option for those without approved exemptions.



AP Images
J.B. Pritzker



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Pritzker took aim at parents who voice their opposition to mask mandates in schools.

“I realize that there are people who like to show up and shout at local school boards, at the local school board members. But the reality is that the vast majority of people in Illinois want to make sure that the children of Illinois, their parents, their communities are safe. And having a mask mandate operative in schools will help to do that,” he [said](#).

Earlier this week, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot declared that all 33,000 city employees “are absolutely going to be required” to be vaccinated.

At least one police union in the city has said “hell no” to the mandate, prompting Lightfoot to say in a press conference Monday that “We’re working through those discussions which have been ongoing now for a couple weeks with our colleagues in organized labor that represent city employees.”

“But we absolutely have to have a vaccine mandate,” she added.

Members of the military all throughout the country are also dealing with forced vaccination, as Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin put out a [memo](#) on Wednesday that troops must immediately begin to take the shot. More than 800,000 service members have yet to do so.

Those in the service are already being pressured into compliance. As *TNA* previously reported, marines who refuse the vaccine are [being threatened](#) with loss of their pensions, access to the G.I. Bill, and other benefits.

Since the COVID-19 scare began, politicians who seek to limit Americans’ freedom with lockdowns, capacity restrictions, and mask and vaccine mandates have run into few legal hurdles. But those who try to protect the individual rights of their constituents find many roadblocks along the way.

In Texas, for example, Governor Greg Abbott, a Republican, signed executive orders to ban mask and vaccine mandates by government entities. But his mask-mandate ban has already been [blocked](#) by a county judge.



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