9/3/2021

Dear Students:

Experiential learning is an integral part of many of our educational programs. We therefore write to advise that as a matter of policy and, in many instances, as a result of public health requirements, a large number of our placement sites now require that you be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to be physically present on-site. We also expect that others are, or will, move in this direction.

By way of example, the Chief Health Officer of the State of California has issued an Order that, among other things, requires students who participate in experiential learning or train at certain sites must have had either their first dose of a one-dose regimen or the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine regimen no later than September 30, 2021.

Sites covered by the Order include, acute-care hospitals, intermediate care facilities, doctors' offices and clinics, congregant living facilities and many more. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health has issued a similar Order that includes other sites.

The Order provides for limited exceptions to the vaccination requirement for qualifying medical reasons and religious beliefs. We note, however, that these exceptions are very narrow and that requests for such exceptions are being closely scrutinized by facilities subject to the Order. Indeed, it is our understanding that the vast majority of facilities covered by the Order will only consider CDC identified contraindications and precautions as qualifying medical reasons. Requests for exceptions must also be supported by a certification from a signed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional practicing under the license of a physician stating that the individual qualifies for the exception.

We also note that between now and September 30, persons who are not fully vaccinated will be required to undergo testing once or twice a week depending on specific terms of another Order issued by the Chief Public Health Officer.

There are other aspects to these and other public health orders, but the point we wish to make is that your ability to be placed, or to continue a placement, at an experiential learning site will be largely dependent on your COVID-19 vaccination status. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, highly effective and if you have not yet begun or completed a vaccination regimen, we urge you to do so immediately.

If you have questions or concerns about your ability to participate in experimental learning please contact your program director. We also refer you to various orders issued by public health officials that are referenced above.

California Public Health Order - July 26, 2021

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Unvaccinated-Workers-In-High-Risk-Settings.aspx>

California Public Health Order - August 5, 2021

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Order-of-the-State-Public-Health-Officer-Health-Care-Worker-Vaccine-Requirement.aspx>

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Order - August 12, 2021

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/HOO/HOO_HealthCareWorkerVaccination.pdf>

If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Office of Experiential Education or your program director.