



Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Umair Shah
Department of Health
Adjudicative Service Office
P.O. Box 47879
Olympia, WA 98504-7879

August 2, 2021

Dear Governor Inslee and Secretary Shah,

As I know you are aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has been uniquely deadly to residents, patients, and staff members of post-acute and long-term care (PALTC) facilities, claiming the lives of over 130,000 residents and patients and almost 2,000 staff members. Since the introduction of various vaccinations for SARS-CoV-2 in December, large numbers of residents and caregivers have received the vaccine leading to dramatic decreases in case rates and deaths in this population. Adverse effects from the vaccinations have been thankfully rare and mild.

Unfortunately, recent surveys show over 38% of nursing home staff nationally have not been fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Although reliable data for Washington state healthcare workers isn't available, anecdotally, we know that a significant proportion of PALTC caregivers in our state also remain unvaccinated. Local and national leaders have employed a variety of educational programs, support, and incentives for staff with some success, but given the dramatic and obvious benefit of COVID-19 vaccinations these facilities and their solid safety profile, the time has come to recommend mandatory vaccination of PALTC healthcare workers.

The Washington State Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine (WA-PALTC) joins over 60 medical organizations, including the Washington State Medical Association, AMDA, Leading Age, AMA, and a growing list of professional medical associations in recommending mandatory COVID-19 vaccination for all health care workers. Unless the staff member has a

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legitimate medical contraindication to COVID-19 vaccination, we ask for your support in legislating this issue requiring all healthcare workers, including those in Post-Acute and Long-Term Care organizations be fully vaccinated as a condition of employment.

Most Sincerely,

Sabine von Preyss-Friedman, MD, FACP, CMD
President, WA-PALTC

Jessica van Fleet-Green MD
Board Member, WA-PALTC

Kevin Henning, MD, CMD
Treasurer, WA-PALTC

Jason Heffernan, MS, MD
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Jonathan Rafflesberger, DNP, ARNP, NP-C
Secretary, WA-PALTC

Linda Jahn
Community Member, WA-PALTC