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Healthcare workers are seen in a recent file photo. (Ariana Drehsler/AFP via Getty Images)

PREMIUM **US NEWS**

Biden Admin's COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate Goes Into Effect for Most Healthcare Workers

By Jack Phillips | February 15, 2022 Updated: February 16, 2022

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Monday marked the deadline for the vast majority of unvaccinated health care workers across the country to comply with a federal COVID-19 vaccine mandate and receive their first dose.

The federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), in a recent update (pdf) earlier this month, said it is "full speed ahead" with enforcing the mandate, which applies to health care staff who work at facilities or entities that receive Medicare or Medicaid funding.

Workers in 24 states have to receive one mRNA vaccine dose or the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine by Monday, Feb. 14, amid court challenges, whereas workers in about half of all states had to comply and receive their first dose by Jan. 27, according to a document (pdf) provided by CMS.

Health care staff who got their first shot on Jan. 27 will have to receive their second shot–if applicable– by Feb. 28. And workers who had to get their first shot on Feb. 14 have until March 15 to get the second one under CMS the mandate.

Workers in Texas have to receive their first dose, if applicable, by next week on Feb. 21 and their second dose by March 21, according to the document.

"Last month, the United States Supreme Court stayed two preliminary injunctions that had prohibited the implementation and enforcement of the [CMS] healthcare staff vaccination rule in 24 states, and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas granted a motion for voluntary dismissal of a related case in Texas," CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure wrote in its letter this month.

It is one of several executive orders that were pursued by the Biden administration late last year, including a controversial vaccine-or-test rule that impacted businesses with 100 or more workers and mandatory vaccines for federal contractor workers. In January, U.S. Supreme Court issued a stay against the mandate for private businesses, and the Biden administration two weeks later withdrew the rule, known as an emergency temporary standard.

In January, the Supreme Court allowed the health care worker mandate to go forward, impacting around 10.4 million workers across the United States.

But such mandates were handed down by the federal government before the emergence of the Omicron COVID-19 variant, which studies have shown generally produces milder symptoms as well as fewer hospitalizations and deaths.

In recent weeks, Democrat-led municipalities and states have started to drop COVID-19-related mandates.

On Monday, Washington, D.C. moved to drop its COVID-19 vaccine mandate to enter certain businesses, becoming one of the first areas in the United States with a vaccine passport system to do so. New York City, Los Angeles, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago are still implementing a vaccine passport system.

"COVID is not as deadly as it was," Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser said Monday, noting a sharp decline in infections and hospitalizations. The city also dropped its indoor mask mandates, but it will keep the policy intact for school children—a move that has drawn ire across the country.

COVID-19 is the illness caused by the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus.

The Epoch Times has contacted CMS for additional comment.

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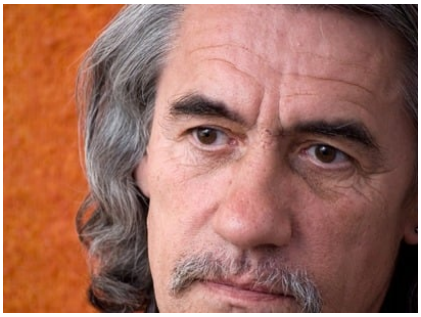

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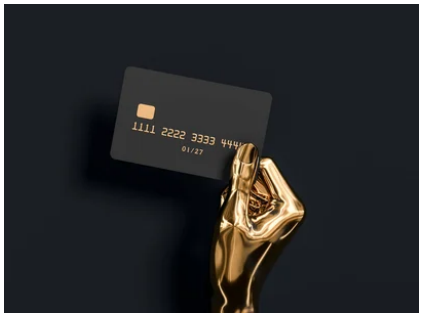

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