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## **Cook Children's Requires COVID-19 Vaccination for Workforce**

**Fort Worth, Texas** – Cook Children's Health Care System announced today it is instituting a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy. Every Cook Children's employee, physician, provider, credentialed staff, student, volunteer, contractor and on-site vendor will be required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by noon on Sept. 27. To be considered fully vaccinated, one must have received either one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine or two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine by the deadline.

In an email to more than 8,000 Cook Children's employees, President and CEO Rick W. Merrill attributed the decision to the increasing rates of COVID-19 in Tarrant County. Public health officials in the region say community spread of the virus is once again considered 'high' due to the surging delta variant.


"The delta variant is very contagious and many of our patients are vulnerable to COVID-19 because they can't get vaccinated at this time," said Merrill. "I personally received the vaccine in December, as did more than 95% of our physicians and two thirds of our employees. Given how close we are to critically-ill children, we know this is the right decision for our system and ultimately our patients."

The number of COVID-19 cases among patients at Cook Children's has increased dramatically over the past few weeks. There are currently 24 children being treated at Cook Children's Medical Center for COVID-19. The rate of positive cases seen across the health care system over the past week is now 11.3%. On June 2, that rate was 1%.

With the mandate in place, Cook Children's joins several hospital systems in Dallas-Fort Worth and dozens of health care institutions across the U.S. requiring COVID-19 vaccination for its workforce. Such mandates regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and health care workers are supported by organizations such as the Children's Hospital Association, American Hospital Association, American Nursing Association, American Medical Association and Texas Nurses Association.

### **About Cook Children's**

Cook Children's Health Care System embraces an inspiring Promise – to improve the health of every child in our region through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, we're proud of our long and rich tradition of serving our community.



Our not-for-profit organization encompasses nine companies – a medical center, two surgery centers, a physician network, home health services and a health plan. It also includes Child Study Center at Cook Children's, Cook Children's Health Services Inc., and Cook Children's Health Foundation. With more than 60 primary, specialty and urgent care locations throughout Texas, families can access our top-ranked specialty programs and network of services to meet their unique needs.

We've worked to improve the health of children from across our primary service area of Denton, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Tarrant and Wise counties for more than 100 years. Based on the exceptional care we provide, patients travel to Cook Children's from around the country and the globe to receive life-saving pediatric care built on leading technology, extraordinary collaboration and the art of caring. For more information, visit [cookchildrens.org](http://cookchildrens.org).

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