

To: All VOA Employees

From: Terry Richards

Date: May 17, 2021

RE: Mask Mandate Guidelines Updated

CDC Guidelines released May 13, 2021 state fully vaccinated people are not being required to wear masks. As of today, VOA Mid-States will not require staff, volunteers, visitors or clients who are fully vaccinated to wear a face mask while in a VOA facility with a few exceptions. This is one of the many rewards for being fully vaccinated!!! We are very excited to be able to implement this policy after so many months of requiring all to wear face masks. Staff, volunteers, visitors and clients who have been fully vaccinated may continue to wear a mask if they are more comfortable doing so.

Staff, volunteers, visitors, and clients who have **not been fully vaccinated** must continue to wear a mask and maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all VOA Mid-States facilities.

Exceptions include, but are not limited to:

- Your job responsibilities require you wear a mask to protect yourself and others. Examples include HIV testing services and direct care in DD Services. Contact your supervisor if you have specific questions.
- **Health care and congregate settings** such as **shelters** nursing homes and correctional facilities. HUD Senior Housing will follow their recommended protocol from National VOA.
- Public transportation like planes, trains and buses.
- K-12 schools, pre-schools, and other childcare settings.
- ALL staff and residents will be required to wear face masks if someone in a residential program is showing symptoms. If a resident test negative for COVID then fully vaccinated people can return to not wearing a face mask. If the resident tests positive, then ALL staff and residents will wear masks and maintain social distance as they always have and follow the CDC guidelines.

ALL staff need to continue to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer and disinfect high touch surfaces, especially in common areas.

If you have been around someone who has been sick and/or begin to show symptoms of COVID get tested and stay home. We encourage everyone to stay home if you are sick even if you have been fully vaccinated.

- Fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.
- If you haven't been vaccinated yet, [find a vaccine](#).

In general, people are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine

If you don't meet these requirements, regardless of your age, you are NOT fully vaccinated. Keep taking all [precautions](#) until you are fully vaccinated.

If you have a condition or are taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated. Talk to your healthcare provider. Even after vaccination, you may need to continue taking all [precautions](#).

- You will still need to follow guidance at your workplace and local businesses.
- If you [travel](#), you should still take steps to [protect yourself and others](#). You will still be [required to wear a mask](#) on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States, and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. Fully vaccinated [international travelers](#) arriving in the United States are still [required to get tested](#) within 3 days of their flight (or show documentation of recovery from COVID-19 in the past 3 months) and should still get tested 3-5 days after their trip.
- You should still watch out for [symptoms of COVID-19](#), especially if you've been around someone who is sick. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get [tested](#) and [stay home](#) and away from others.
- People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken the immune system, should talk to their healthcare provider to discuss their activities. They may need to keep taking all [precautions](#) to prevent COVID-19.

This link will take you to the CDC website page with more information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>