

Strategic  
**Health Care**  
Marketing

# **Communicating Employee Vaccine Mandates: A Formula for Success**

A SHCM webinar for health care marketers,  
communicators and strategists

November 10, 2021

# Webinar Presenters from Geisinger Health



**Don Stanziano**  
Chief Marketing and  
Communications Officer



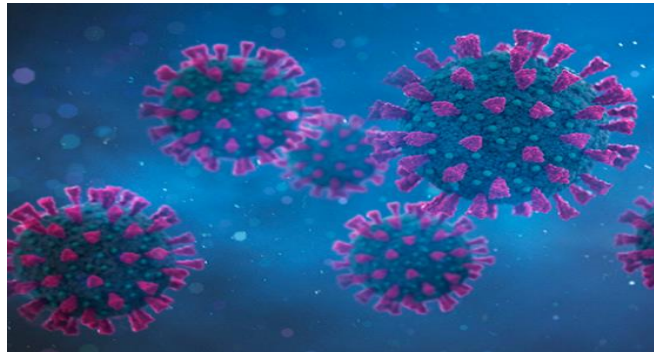
**Emile Lee**  
Vice President, Corporate  
Communications

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# Employee Vaccine Mandates

The ongoing public health threat posed by COVID-19 is prompting more health care organizations to implement employee vaccine mandates.

The opposition this has generated among some medical workers and the public makes crafting mandate communications critically important for marketers.



# The Geisinger Internal Comms Campaign

Geisinger Health marketing leaders developed an internal communications campaign that was integral to increasing employee compliance with a health system vaccine mandate that recently took effect.



# Agenda

In today's webinar Don and Emile will focus on:

- Sharing insights into employee concerns
- Discussing the benefits of collaborating with other health systems
- Providing an overview of the marcom team's formula for success in its internal campaign
- Emphasizing the importance of preparing for the impact of a mandate

They'll also highlight key takeaways for you to consider to boost employee compliance with a COVID vaccine mandate.

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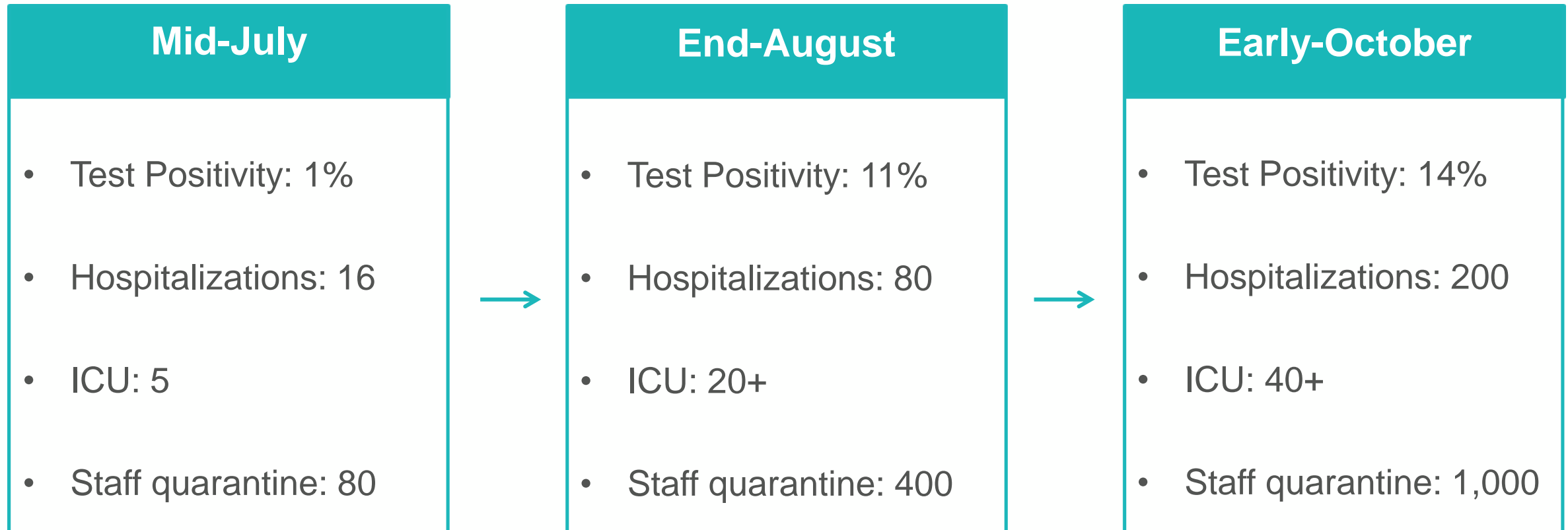
# Context for Employee Vaccine Mandate Decision

Geisinger

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# Emergence of Delta created urgency

Last summer, despite Geisinger's efforts to encourage employees to get vaccinated against COVID-19, less than three-quarters had done so. Community spread and impact was accelerating exponentially.



*Note, since May 1, 2021 close to 90% of all hospitalizations and ICUs were unvaccinated*



# Marcom Campaign

**Communicate Nov. 1 deadline / encourage vaccinations**

Began by identifying unvaccinated employees' concerns. Surveys and focus groups performed. Top issues:

- Potential adverse impact on women's health
- Possibility of harmful side effects
- Perception that prior infection provides adequate immunity
- Opposition to mandates

Marcom team also collaborated with peers at other health systems that implemented workforce vaccine mandates.



# Communications content

Based on employee feedback and networking with other colleagues, robust comms plans and messaging were developed.

**G** **Administrative Announcement**

**To:** All Employees  
**From:** Jaewon Ryu, MD, JD, President and CEO  
**Re:** COVID-19 vaccination requirement and retention investments  
**Date:** Aug. 25, 2021

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have worked tirelessly, under challenging and uncertain circumstances, to continue delivering world-class care to our patients.

Despite these efforts, now eight months into the COVID-19 pandemic and facing another surge in infection, we are announcing that we will require all employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The science is clear: getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and others, as well as this surge is driven by the emergence of the delta variant. This is part of how we can stop the spread of the virus.

## COVID-19 vaccine information

### Who we're vaccinating now\*:

- Geisinger employees and **Phase 1A** healthcare personnel
- People age 65+
- People age 16–64 with certain high-risk medical conditions

\*Note: Vaccine appointments are limited, but if you're eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, you can request an appointment. We'll contact you to schedule one.

### Who's coming up next:

**The numbers say it all.**

**87%** of people hospitalized at Geisinger with COVID-19\* haven't been fully vaccinated.

Don't be part of that majority.

Schedule your shot:  
[geisinger.org/COVIDVax](https://geisinger.org/COVIDVax).



\*Since May 1, 2021

**G** **Geisinger**  
Published by Salesforce Marketing Cloud · May 4 at 12:00 PM · ...

When it's great to know you're all on the same team. Vaccination brings the big win.

Learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and schedule your appointment today at: <https://geisinger.cc/3h1cqz>



**G** **Geisinger**  
Published by Salesforce Marketing Cloud · August 25 at 12:26 PM · ...

Today, 18 months into the COVID-19 pandemic and facing another surge in our hospitals, we are announcing all employees will be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Rooted in values for safety and high-quality care, requiring all Geisinger employees to be vaccinated fulfills our obligation to do everything we can to protect our patients, their families and each other. And it also helps protect our friends and neighbors — who rely on us every day for high-quality, access... **See More**

 Visit the COVID-19 Information Center for vaccine resources.  
[Get Vaccine Info](#)

   You and 2.5K others 3K Comments 1.9K Shares



# Multi-channel comms

**Multi-channel approach was vital, but most successful tactic was coaching supervisors to communicate directly with staff.**

Workforce engagement with digital comms and social media also was high. Other Keys to Success:

- Consistency in messaging across all channels with entire workforce
- Optimal frequency and repetition in communications
- Accommodating staff who prefer to consume info in different ways
- Using the right tone in communications is also crucial.

# Testimonials by employees

Major part of campaign strategy was creating targeted content to address the top issues raised by unvaccinated staff in surveys and focus groups.



**Watch: What to expect when you're expecting — and vaccinated >>**

Soon-to-be parents Jana Kass and Dan Landesberg explain why they got the COVID-19 vaccine and how wanting to start a family was a factor in that decision. Want to hear more on the topic? Join our webinar on June 3. Get the details here.

And leveraging our SMEs to address key employee hesitancy topics.

# Addressing key concerns



## [Watch: Pregnancy and the COVID vaccine >>](#)

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for both mom and baby? Watch Dr. Brytanie Marshall address some of the most common concerns and misconceptions. Still have questions? Join our webinar on the topic June 3. Get the details here.



## [Fertility, pregnancy, breastfeeding and the COVID-19 vaccine >>](#)

Get the answers to all your questions regarding pregnancy and the COVID-19 vaccine during a special information session with our experts June 3. Read more here.

# Targeted approach

Same targeted approach used with virtual town halls, webinars, infographics etc. The team set up regular online meetings for employees regarding top concerns led by Geisinger clinicians.

## COVID-19 updates

By the numbers:

79 [COVID+ patients](#) in our hospitals

69.4% [employees vaccinated](#)

Click [here](#) for number of COVID+ patients in hospitals and 7-day average of new positive tests



### [Answers to some of your most pressing questions regarding COVID-19 vaccines and bonuses](#)

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Questions about yesterday's announcement? Here are answers to some of our most frequently asked questions.

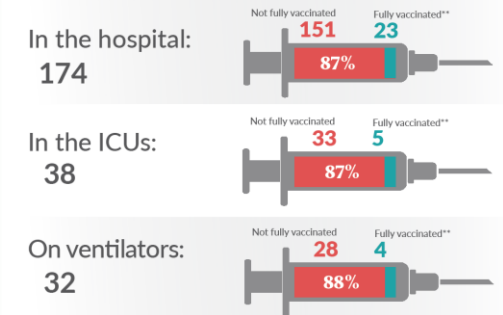
### [Getting the COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy >>](#)

Watch this video to hear Dr. Bryantie Marshall talk about pregnancy and the COVID-19 vaccine.



## Should you get vaccinated? The numbers say yes.

Patients with COVID-19 at Geisinger\*



\*Numbers as of 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 18, 2021  
\*\*Vaccinated patient numbers include those admitted for other reasons and later test positive during routine testing, though they may not show any symptoms.

Geisinger

## Management Update



Special Edition

Wednesday, Aug. 25

 YOUR TO-DO LIST

### COVID-19 vaccination requirement announced

Geisinger is requiring all Geisinger employees, medical staff, residents, fellows, volunteers, trainees, students and temporary staff be fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus by Oct. 15, 2021. This includes those working remotely and on site. Exemptions must be requested by Sept. 10.

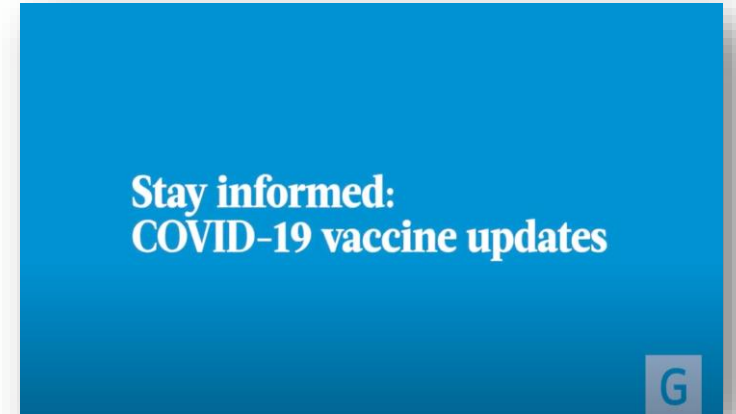
The [employee vaccination policy](#) provides additional information regarding our procedure.

Talking points and FAQs are available [here](#) to help guide conversation with your teams.

The talking points speak to why this decision was made and provides information about the vaccine's safety and efficacy, as well as timing around next steps.

# Addressing misinformation

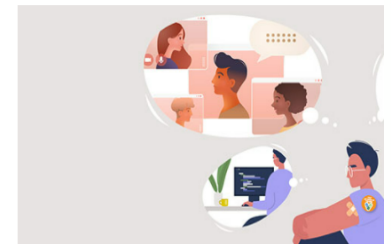
Campaign focused on providing science-based facts to set the record straight, not only from Geisinger clinicians, but from sources like CDC.



## How to Address COVID-19 Vaccine Misinformation

The spread of misinformation on social media and through other channels can affect COVID-19 vaccine confidence.

Misinformation often arises when there are information gaps or unsettled science, as human nature seeks to reason, better understand, and fill in the gaps.





# Other tactics

- Leveraged best practices and tactics used during the 18-month external communications campaign
- Partnered with HR to be responsive to commentary and questions that arose during:
  - Town halls / virtual sessions
  - Internal social media channel (Yammer)
  - Intranet story comments
- Cash incentive
- Encouraged dialogue regardless of mandate position



# Outcomes

- As of Nov. 5 – 100% of staff have met our vaccine policy
- An additional 7,000 employees were vaccinated
- Staff on quarantine and testing positive has dropped by more than 50% since Aug. 25
  - Means more staff available to care for all patients
- 150 employees were terminated, representing 0.6% of our workforce
- Recruitment between Jan-October is up 100% YoY
- We had suspended non-electives in September – looking to bring back online in November



# Key takeaways

- Development of a comprehensive campaign to communicate the mandate played a major role in increasing the vaccination rate
- Campaign's effectiveness was driven by targeted communications designed to:
  - Address main concerns of unvaccinated workers ID'd through internal surveys and focus groups.
  - Leverage what team learned from collaborating with marketers at other health systems.
- Using multi-channel approach was vital, with direct manager-to employee engagement most successful
- Consistency and repetition in messaging was important, along with a sensitive tone focused on educating the unvaccinated with scientific facts.
- Being prepared is essential. Leadership took several action steps to quickly adapt to reduced staffing levels and replace terminated staff.
- Offering a cash incentive contributed to staff compliance with the mandate.
- Partnering with a cross-functional team was essential (HR, Ops, Clinical, Employee Health, Marketing, Communications, etc.)

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**Q&A**

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**Thank you for joining us  
for today's webinar!**

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