



*September 22, 2021*

OPEIU supports the recommendation that everyone be vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 in a just, fair, and equitable manner. Studies show that a safe COVID-19 vaccine will, at a minimum, decrease the number of people experiencing severe effects of the virus and save countless lives. We expect that the impending full approval by the FDA will increase peoples' confidence in the vaccine's effectiveness and safety, and that with FDA approval the number of vaccinated individuals will increase significantly.

We agree that deciding whether to be vaccinated or not is a personal choice and should be defended. Our union will defend those rights for those with medical or religious objections to the extent possible. It is well established legal precedent that vaccine mandates are legal as long as they are not discriminatory. We will not tolerate discrimination and will enforce the guidelines set by the EEOC.

We also believe that as a union, we must be concerned with the right to a safe and healthy workplace as paramount. There are numerous regulations, policies and laws that dictate proper safety equipment, ventilation systems and trainings that all employees in all types of workplaces or roles are expected to adhere to in order to protect themselves, coworkers, customers, and the public. It is strongly believed, based on studies, that the COVID-19 vaccine minimizes the transmission of COVID-19, and the likelihood of serious illness.

OPEIU demands and expects that our employers should do everything possible in running their businesses or organizations to safeguard the health and well-being of their employees, our members, by doing the following:

- Ensuring that all protocols recommended by the CDC and OSHA are being adhered to by all employees, contractors, customers, students, and visitors – This includes wearing proper fitting masks, when necessary, social distancing and following proper hygiene procedures.
- Upgrading ventilation systems and/or providing portable HEPA air purifiers to improve the air quality and lower the possibility of transmission of dangerous airborne particles.
- Educating employees about the dangers of COVID-19, how it's transmitted and how to safe-guard coworkers and family members.
- Providing free on-site vaccinations and additional paid sick days to cover time off if needed to get vaccinated or because of side effects caused by the vaccine or falling ill from COVID-19.
- Engaging in helping underserved communities get vaccinated.
- Establishing committees and holding regular meetings with local unions to ensure fair treatment, educate employees, and to update policies.

Unions stand for promoting the greater good for all working people, their families, and communities. This pandemic calls for all of us working together to eradicate COVID-19.

Please share this with stewards and members and request bargaining with your employers to help protect our members, our jobs, and our communities.