



Mountain Sky Area of The United Methodist Church

Mountain Sky Conference

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POLICY ON COVID-19 VACCINES AND RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS MOUNTAIN SKY CONFERENCE

The Bishop and cabinet of the Mountain Sky Conference will not provide religious exemption letters for those seeking to be exempt from the recent vaccine mandate from the US government for companies with over 100 employees.

The United Methodist Church has a commitment to the common good as we seek to do no harm and love our neighbors as ourselves. It is a matter of discipleship as followers of Jesus to do all we can to protect the most vulnerable and engage in behaviors that further healthy communities.

The three vaccines in use in the United States are safe, **have been approved by the FDA** (Johnson and Johnson and Moderna for emergency use. Pfizer has full approval) and are shown to be effective against COVID-19, providing protection against severe disease, hospitalization, and death. Those who are unvaccinated are

contracting severe cases of COVID-19 that are taxing our health care workers, stretching our medical resources, and have cost billions of dollars in hospital expenses. The human toll, loss of life, and grieving families are compounded when we learn that “Over 280,000 COVID-19 hospitalizations could have been prevented by vaccination between June to August 2021.”

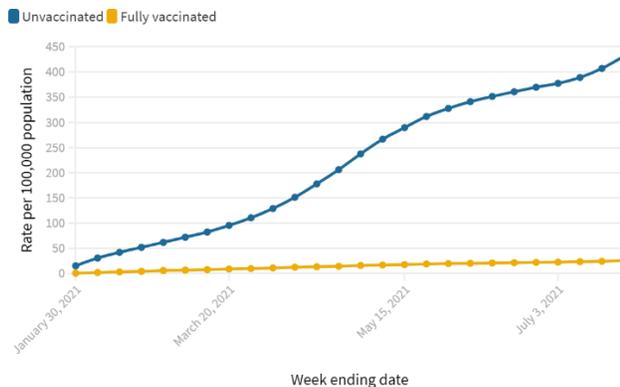
The United Methodist Church is making the COVID-19 vaccine a missional priority: “As an expression of discipleship and love of neighbor, the Connectional Table calls The United Methodist Church to address the inequities of COVID-19 vaccine access and education as a missional priority. We call the whole United Methodist Church to a prophetic and missional response to the critical need for global vaccine equity, access and education.”

By receiving the vaccine, we are displaying our love of God and neighbor as we seek a COVID-19 free world. We call on United Methodists across the Mountain Sky Conference to provide vaccine education and access in each local congregation and commit to work towards vaccine equity across the globe.

Growing divide

The gap in the cumulative hospitalization rates among unvaccinated and fully vaccinated adults 18 years and older has been growing since COVID-19 vaccines started rolling out in late 2020. The data were adjusted for age and come from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee and Utah.

Cumulative rates of U.S. COVID-19 hospitalizations of adults by vaccination status, January–July 2021



Source: [F.P. Havers et al./medRxiv.org](https://www.fphavers.com/medRxiv.org)

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<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/is-the-covid19-vaccine-safe>
See <https://www.healthsystemtracker.org/brief/unvaccinated-covid-patients-cost-the-u-s-health-system-billions-of-dollars/> for more information