

## Viewpoint: Why we need to require COVID vaccines in high-risk settings such as nursing homes and prisons

In long-term care facilities, residents are usually very elderly, and many of them have medical conditions that put them at high risk [of dying from COVID]. Many prisoners too are elderly and have medical conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID disease.

In both types of institutions, the staff goes out into the community, and then comes back to interact with vulnerable residents that have no good way to avoid the contact. Under these circumstances, there may be justification to mandate vaccines.

There are important questions to consider in relation to imposing a mandate. Is it legal, and is it ethical? Can employers do it, and should they?

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[W]orkers in long-term care facilities and prisons take on a job that is already highly regulated and involves an at least implied agreement to restrictions and requirements in the service of the job.

Under these circumstances, and despite the unknowns, it is appropriate to mandate vaccines for health care workers and correction officers in residential institutions with a vulnerable, captive population. It makes sense to cover the support personnel—cleaning, food and administration as well.

Few like being told they must vaccinate. No one likes being told they or those in their care are going to die.

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