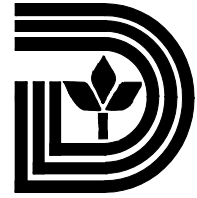


Memorandum



DATE March 24, 2023

CITY OF DALLAS

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Dallas Fire-Rescue's Paramedic COVID-19 Vaccinations**

During the Public Safety Committee meeting on March 7, 2023, the Committee asked Dallas-Fire Rescue Department (DFR) representatives whether DFR requires recruits to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to be eligible for hire, as well as whether Dallas College – Brookhaven Campus (Brookhaven) requires students to be vaccinated prior to enrolling in paramedic school. While neither DFR nor Brookhaven requires the COVID-19 vaccine, the hospitals with which paramedic students must complete their clinical rotations *do* require the COVID-19 vaccine. Because this requirement by the hospitals impacts DFR employees in paramedic training with Brookhaven, we are writing to provide additional context to the situation.

On February 17, 2022, Deputy City Manager Jon Fortune sent a memorandum to the Mayor and City Council advising that, based on a January 13, 2022 ruling by the United States Supreme Court, which upheld the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service's rule that requires hospitals and other healthcare providers to mandate the COVID-19 vaccination for staff, including paramedic students, Brookhaven announced that any paramedic student not fully vaccinated by March 15, 2022, would be dropped from its paramedic program and would not be eligible for re-enrollment until vaccinated. Additional information is included in the February 17, 2022, memorandum, which is attached.

DFR notified all employees currently enrolled or awaiting future scheduling of the paramedic training program that Brookhaven's training program required students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, that students not fully vaccinated by the deadline would be dropped from the program by Brookhaven, and that certain alternatives to receive paramedic training may be available. DFR specifically reminded employees that successful receipt of a paramedic certification is required for continued employment as a Fire-Rescue Officer with DFR. Any student who is removed from the Brookhaven program due to refusal to comply with the vaccine mandates required by the federal rule, or who does not receive a valid exemption or training with an alternative program that does not require a clinical rotation, would be in violation of DFR's requirements for not successfully obtaining a paramedic certification.

In an effort to work with members who were unwilling or unable to be vaccinated, DFR, at that time, offered members the opportunity to enroll in an alternative paramedic training program, approved by DFR, at their own expense. Unfortunately, at this time, DFR is not aware of any current local paramedic training programs that do not require clinical rotations in healthcare facilities that also satisfy all requirements of paramedic licensing by the Texas Department of State Health Services. Therefore, employees who do not or

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cannot complete their paramedic certification through Brookhaven will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

The Biden administration announced that it will end the COVID-19 national public health emergency on May 11, 2023. If that occurs, it is possible that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' rule could be relaxed or modified in the future. We will continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates should a change occur that impacts DFR's employees in paramedic training.



Jon Fortune
Deputy City Manager
[Attachment]

- c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Tammy Palomino, Interim City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Billierae Johnson, City Secretary
Preston Robinson, Administrative Judge
Kimberly Bizzor Tolbert, Deputy City Manager
- Majed A. Al-Ghafry, Assistant City Manager
M. Elizabeth (Liz) Cedillo-Pereira, Assistant City Manager
Dr. Robert Perez, Assistant City Manager
Carl Simpson, Assistant City Manager
Jack Ireland, Chief Financial Officer
Genesis D. Gavino, Chief of Staff to the City Manager
Directors and Assistant Directors

Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE February 17, 2022

TO Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

SUBJECT **Dallas Fire- Rescue's Paramedic Training**

I am writing to notify you of a situation that impacts newly hired members of Dallas Fire-Rescue (DFR) and other members who have not yet become certified paramedics. On January 13, 2022, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) upheld the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service's rule that requires healthcare providers, including hospitals, to mandate the COVID-19 vaccination for staff of these facilities. The definition of "staff" in the rule renders the vaccine mandate applicable to DFR paramedic students who are performing clinical rotations in a hospital through the paramedic educational program unless the paramedic student has received a medical or religious exemption from the mandating entity.

All newly hired members for DFR's Operations Bureau are required, as a condition of employment, to become paramedics certified by the State of Texas. DFR provides this training free of cost to DFR members, through a partnership with Dallas College - Brookhaven Campus (Brookhaven). Part of this training, as mandated by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), includes a series of clinical rotations provided by hospitals. The City does not require the COVID-19 vaccine for employees, including DFR members. Additionally, DSHS does not require the COVID-19 vaccine and currently allows students to substitute additional shifts as a paramedic intern on an ambulance for these clinical rotations. However, after the SCOTUS ruling, Brookhaven has announced that it will not permit students to complete additional ambulance shifts in lieu of the clinical rotations. Brookhaven has announced that any paramedic student not fully vaccinated by March 15, 2022 will be dropped from the program and will not be eligible for re-enrollment until they are fully vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention define fully vaccinated as a person who has received their primary series of COVID-19 vaccines. Further, the paramedic interns who are not participating in the clinical rotations due to their unvaccinated status are missing critical training and experience, as many of the clinical rotation experiences cannot be replicated by extra ambulance ride outs. Nevertheless, should unvaccinated DFR members identify a paramedic school that does not require the COVID-19 vaccine, DFR will consider, in consultation with DFR's Office of the Medical Director, whether the members may be conditionally credentialed through the alternative institution, contingent upon the member's successful completion of the program and certification by the State of Texas. Members who choose to attend an alternative paramedic training program are responsible for paying the cost of the alternative program. However, the City will credit the member the amount that the City would have paid for the member to attend Brookhaven's paramedic training program.

As a result of the SCOTUS ruling and Brookhaven's announcement, the following message will be delivered to all DFR employees currently enrolled or awaiting future scheduling of the paramedic training program:

- Your employment with DFR and the City of Dallas requires that you successfully complete training to become a paramedic certified by the State of Texas.

DATE February 17, 2022

SUBJECT **Dallas Fire-Rescue's Paramedic Training**

- Currently, this training program is provided by Brookhaven at the City's cost, which requires students to be fully vaccinated against the virus that causes COVID-19 by March 15, 2022.
- Any paramedic student who is not fully vaccinated by this date will be dropped from the course by Brookhaven and will be ineligible to re-enroll until they are fully vaccinated.
- However, subject to approval by DFR and additional credentialing conditions identified by DFR's Office of the Medical Director, members may attend an alternative paramedic school that does not require the COVID-19 vaccine. The City must approve the alternative program.
- Members who choose to attend an alternative paramedic training program are responsible for paying the cost of the alternative program. However, the City will credit the member the amount that the City would have paid for the member to attend Brookhaven's paramedic training program.
- The quality of paramedic training is the City's top priority. Should it be determined that DFR members are not receiving the highest standard of paramedic training from an alternative program, the Fire Chief reserves the right to suspend this option.
- DFR will notify impacted employees of available alternative options.
- Any student dropped from the course based on a failure to comply with vaccination mandates, and who does not receive a recognized exemption or is unable or unwilling to participate in an alternative institution, will be unable to fulfill the requirement of completing paramedic training, and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- Any student wishing to become fully vaccinated before this deadline is eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine free of charge.

In order to give affected members time to consider their options and to become fully vaccinated before March 15, 2022, if they choose to do so, this message will be delivered this week.

Please let me know if you have any questions.



Jon Fortune
Deputy City Manager

c: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
Chris Caso, City Attorney
Mark Swann, City Auditor
Billerae Johnson, City Secretary
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