

Diocese of Toledo
Guidance for COVID-19 Vaccinations - All Diocesan Entities
January 5, 2021

During these days, when all of us have been affected by COVID-19 or worse yet have suffered the loss of loved ones because of the virus, there is a greater need for each of us to turn to our compassionate Lord and His Blessed Mother, who never fail to be near us in times of trial. We are blessed and fortunate that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the distribution of vaccines to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of these vaccines raises a number of moral, legal, and practical issues which merit careful consideration. It is out of deep concern and pastoral solicitude for the faithful of the Diocese of Toledo (Diocese), that this guidance is offered. The guidance is designed to assist and enable our parishes, schools, and other diocesan entities properly to address matters concerning COVID-19 vaccines.

Use of Certain Vaccines is Morally Acceptable and Should be Encouraged

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), which is responsible for safeguarding the doctrine on faith and morals, with the approval of the Holy Father, recently confirmed that no one is morally obligated to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Each person, however, has the duty to protect one's own health and to pursue the common good of all. When means to prevent the ongoing spread of the virus other than vaccination do not exist, the pursuit of the common good may suggest vaccination with a view to protect the most vulnerable, the weakest and the most exposed. **Accordingly, the Diocese recommends that each person, particularly those at higher risk, seriously consider the possibility of receiving a vaccine in order to protect one's own health and the health of those around them.**

Those who choose to receive a vaccine, should be careful to receive one that is not morally compromised. For information concerning the moral implications of receiving vaccination, see the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's, "Note on the Morality of Using Some Anti-Covid-19 Vaccines," the USCCB statement, and the statement from the Bishops of the Catholic Conference of Ohio.

The Diocese will not Mandate Employee Vaccinations

As the CDF has stated, no one is morally obligated to receive a vaccination, and the Diocese has determined that it **will not** mandate that diocesan employees, or parish/school employees, be vaccinated.

Also, no government authority has mandated vaccinations.

Moreover, although the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued guidance on December 16, 2020, allowing employers to mandate that their employees be vaccinated before working on-site, there are exceptions to this general rule. For instance, employees who cannot receive the vaccine because of a medical condition, disability, or because of a sincerely held religious belief, are entitled to certain protections under various laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A mandate requiring employee vaccinations throughout the Diocese or at an individual parish or school may violate certain of these employment law statutes.

Diocesan entities are not permitted to mandate that their employees receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Parish, School, and Other Diocesan Facilities may be Used to Serve as Vaccine Distribution Centers

Your location's facilities may be made available to facilitate distribution of the vaccines to employees, parishioners, or the general public. Such use is conditioned, however, upon having certain protocols in place, including but not limited to the following:

- the entity wishing to use the facility must provide proof of insurance, along with a written commitment to indemnify, to protect your location and the Diocese
- persons entering your facility to receive a vaccine must execute a release of liability in favor of your location and the Diocese
- safeguards must be in place whenever any facility is open to outsiders, especially when students might be present
- distributing vaccines that are not morally compromised according to the CDF and USCCB (e.g. Moderna and Pfizer)

If you are approached by a government agency or other organization concerning use of your facility, you should contact Mr. Thomas Antonini, Director of Risk Management for the Diocese of Toledo Management Corporation (tantonini@toledodiocese.org), to ensure such protocols are in place.

Availability and Cost of Vaccination

The Ohio Department of Health has indicated that school employees will be eligible to receive vaccines in Phase 1B. You will be notified if/when the Diocesan Human Resources Department or Catholic Education Department become aware of the process for employees to receive vaccinations or of vendors offering on-site vaccination clinics for employees. You are encouraged to engage with your local health department regarding availability of vaccines in your area.

The Diocese of Toledo Healthcare Plan covers 100% of all costs related to the administration of a Covid-19 vaccine, with no member cost share.

Links to Key Resources

[The Holy See's, "Note on the Morality of Using Some Anti-Covid-19 Vaccines"](#)

[Document from the Bishops of the Ohio Catholic Conference](#)

[Document from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)

[Documents from the National Catholic Bioethics Center](#)

Please make every effort to continue to be mindful of the guidance issued by state, county, and local public health officials and to implement them to the best of your ability, with practical, prudent and pastoral sensitivity. Please contact the Diocese of Toledo Management Corporation staff for additional support as needed (Amanda Fisher afisher@toledodiocese.org – 419.244.6711).