

# Bond

## Employer Mandated Vaccination: EEOC Guidance Update



1

### Presenters



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2

## Agenda

- History of Employer Vaccination Requirements
- EEOC Guidance
- Practical Suggestions



3

## Historical Context

- Historically, mandatory flu policies existed in the healthcare context and courts in New York have generally upheld such policies, so long as they provide medical and religious exemptions.
- In Kiel v. The Regents of the University of California, et al., a California superior court denied plaintiffs' request for a preliminary injunction to enjoin the enforcement of a policy mandating students, faculty and staff receive a flu vaccine as a condition to access University property during the 2020-2021 flu season.



4

## Can Employers Mandate the COVID-19 Vaccine?

- EEOC Guidance
  - Implies that vaccination may be required if exemptions allowed
- Historical Context
  - Generally permitted in medical settings



5

## Can Employers Mandate the COVID-19 Vaccine?

- Emergency Use Authorization (“EUA”)
  - [Emergency Use Authorization for Vaccines Explained](#)
  - Mechanism to allow use of vaccine that is not fully approved by FDA
  - FDA must ensure that recipients of the vaccine under an EUA are informed that they have the option to accept or refuse the vaccine
- Guidance from New York State?



6

## EEOC Guidance – ADA

- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**
  - Restricts employer ability to require medical examinations and make disability related inquires
  - Admission of vaccine not a “medical examination”
  - BUT, Pre-screening questions may elicit protected information
    - Only may be asked where “job-related and consistent with business necessity”
- **Exceptions**
  - Vaccine offered on voluntary basis
  - Vaccine received from third party with whom employer has no contract (proof of vaccination requirement)



7

## EEOC Guidance – GINA

- **Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA)**
  - Protects against disclosure or acquisition of “genetic information”
  - Admission of vaccine not problematic
  - BUT, Pre-screening questions may elicit protected information
    - Depends on screening checklists
    - Potentially an issue if questions ask information about immune systems of family members
- **Recommendation that employers request proof of vaccination rather than administer the vaccine**



8

## EEOC Guidance – ADA and Title VII Issues

- ADA Accommodation Issues
  - Employer must show that unvaccinated employee would pose a “direct threat”
    - Individualized assessment of four factors: (a) duration of the risk, (b) nature and severity of the potential harm, (c) likelihood that the harm will occur, and (d) the imminence of the harm
  - Reasonable Accommodation
    - No exclusion from workplace unless there is “no way” to provide a reasonable accommodation absent “undue hardship”
  - Termination vs. Exclusion from Workplace



9

## EEOC Guidance – ADA and Title VII Issues

- Religious Accommodation Issues
  - What is a religious belief?
  - Reasonable Accommodation?
  - Undue Hardship?
    - More than a *de minimus* cost or burden to the employer



10

## Vaccination - Options

- No Action
- Encourage/Incentivize Vaccination (Voluntary)
  - Administer on-site
- Mandate Proof of Vaccine (if permitted)
- Mandate Vaccination Administered by Employer or Employer Contractor (if permitted)



11

## A few tips....

- If permitted to require vaccination, ensure there is a legitimate basis to mandate.
- Allow exemptions for medical (including pregnancy) and religious reasons.
- Have a clear process for requesting exemptions
- Review exemption requests on a case-by-case basis, review them carefully (preferably with the help of outside counsel), and engage each employee in the interactive process.
- Document. Document. Document.
- Provide training.
- For employees who refuse to get vaccinated, be sure you understand why before taking disciplinary action (i.e., is it for medical or religious reasons).



12