

# Prepare Now for Winter COVID-19 Vaccination Tracking and Testing

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We're all tired of hearing and worrying about COVID-19. In addition to the tragic loss of life, it has universally added stress to the way we live and work. But while COVID-19 cases are currently low in the U.S., it may still not be time to let our collective guards down. Now is the time for organizations to proactively plan and prepare for the likelihood of a winter COVID-19 surge in the future. Vetting vendors and establishing systems will help reduce disruption and staffing issues when COVID-19 vaccination tracking and testing is needed again.

From testing to masks, both governments and organizations are relaxing COVID-19 protocols. The unfortunate reality is that COVID-19 is not gone, and many infectious disease experts say that testing remains a crucial tool to prevent disease spread and keep cases low. Additionally, they predict that cases are likely to rise again in the fall and winter months.<sup>1</sup> The job of organizational leaders is to anticipate these challenges and mitigate the disruption they cause.

## Developing a Protocol Around COVID-19 Vaccination Tracking and Testing

There are a few steps in you can quickly deploy the next time you need to track or update your employees' vaccination status, vaccine exemption status or COVID-19 test results. The first step is to identify the vaccination status of staff, and who is exempt from getting vaccinated (for reasons such as religion or a pre-existing medical condition).

The next step is to analyze vendors, partnerships and resources, both medical and ancillary, that your organization currently has in place. Talk with your broker about options your insurance carrier might provide. Many vendors provide tracking and testing technology that works alongside other HR platforms; you may already have access to these types of technologies through existing relationships. By analyzing all of your options with current vendors, you can determine if it's feasible to put more administrative effort into implementing COVID-19 rules and regulations.

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*A winter COVID-19 surge could bring changes to local health and safety requirements.*

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<sup>1</sup> [CNN](#), "Demand for Covid-19 testing is falling, but experts caution it's as important as ever"



It's vital to stay up to date with all COVID-19 information and compliance rules. As we've seen, regulations can change throughout the year, from month to month or day to day.

### **Third-Party Vendors**

Many organizations are looking for better ways to manage their COVID-19 procedures and turning to concierge services to manage tracking and testing. Several vendors, such as Wellness Coaches and Eden Health, provide onsite COVID-19 testing, take-home tests, onsite vaccination services and tracking technology. Some vendors can build this into their health offerings and existing virtual platforms, saving employers on medical spend.

Investing in tracking technology can relieve a huge administrative burden from smaller organizations still relying on a manual system. Some vendors offer tracking technology at a very high cost (sometimes tens of thousands of dollars to organizations with a 500-employee minimum), making it inaccessible for many.

Fortunately, there are more options than even six months ago offering more flexibility and affordability. Some vendors, like MediKeeper, offer tracking technology at a much more affordable rate, offering a six-month contract for \$500 per month and a one-time setup fee of \$1,500. Given that these needs may be temporary, contract and duration flexibility is an advantage to consider. Talk with your broker about affordable options that are a fit for your organization.

### **Next Steps for Employers**

COVID-19 may be waning for now, but it's not gone and neither are the associated operational and safety concerns. It's important for employers to have a seamless system going forward that they can deploy when needed. Don't throw away any of the work you've done creating COVID-19 protocols based on past regulations. Talk with your broker about how to leverage your partnerships and negotiate costs so that your organization can stay prepared and up to date. ■

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