



CDC Advising Caution with Delta Spread

With the delta variant of the virus being far more contagious, comprising over 80% of new infections, and daily case counts **rising** from the 12,000 range to now above 40,000, the federal government has decided to **not lift travel restrictions** just yet and is **revising mask guidance** to urge everyone wear a mask in indoor public settings in counties with **substantial or high transmission** (which is over 60% of U.S. counties). They also advise mask use of everyone in a K-12 school setting, regardless of vaccination status.

In March, the CDC had advised that fully vaccinated individuals could nix the **mask** in many indoor and almost all outdoor settings, and in April asserted they could resume **travel** at low risk. But with rates of **transmissions, cases, hospitalizations, and deaths** trending the wrong direction, health authorities advise exercising more caution and resuming indoor mask use in public for a while, even if fully vaccinated. State and local governments are already responding, including **California, San Francisco, and New York City**.

To that end, we've started seeing more employers require vaccines, including the Veterans Administration (**VA**). So far, states, municipalities, and even the **federal government** seem poised to *require proof of vaccine or weekly testing*. We discussed some **considerations** related to vaccine mandates back in June, and courts thus far have backed a **hospital system** in Texas and a **university** in Indiana that implemented vaccine mandates with accommodations for disabilities and sincerely held religious beliefs as required by EEOC rules. We would just reiterate that it's imperative to work with legal counsel on your workplace policies, communications, and incentives/penalties.

IMA will continue to monitor regulator guidance and offer meaningful, practical, timely information.

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