

WHITEPAPER

Developing a Commercial Market COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy





The Challenge

With a difficult 2020 in the rearview mirror, employers are eager to bring employees back to the workplace, and many are looking to grow their workforce. A recent report¹ showed that 82% of employers plan on hiring in 2021, including 37% planning to backfill jobs and 35% who will be hiring for new positions. However, while employer outlook is positive for the coming year, it is not without challenges that have resulted from the pandemic. Employers are concerned about keeping employees safe when they return and seek to offer reassurance to employees that their health is a priority.

Many employers see COVID-19 vaccines as the key to protecting both employees and customers. Employees themselves have confidence in the vaccine and see it as a way to protect themselves when they return to the workplace. A survey² has shown that 54% of employees would feel safe returning to the workplace if they were vaccinated, even if not all of their coworkers were.

Vaccinating employees is also critical within certain industries, such as manufacturing, hospitality, food service, entertainment, construction and other businesses where work cannot be performed remotely. For these employers, vaccinations can play a crucial role in getting employees back to work safely and encouraging customers to return to their businesses.



Employers Can Mandate Vaccines

While many employers are still determining their return-to-work policies and how vaccines factor in, it is completely legal for employers to mandate that employees must be vaccinated in order to return to the workplace. Private-sector employers can also require employees to be vaccinated regardless of the industry they operate in. Two major exceptions that will generally preclude employers from requiring vaccinations include:

- **A medical condition that puts an employee at risk.** The employer will have to review the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to determine whether a reasonable accommodation can be provided, such as working remotely or being reassigned, or whether having to provide this accommodation would constitute an undue hardship.
- **A bona fide religious objection.** It is up to the employer if they want to make an accommodation, but the obligation is not absolute.

The Opportunity for Health Systems

While it is ultimately up to the employer whether they make vaccines mandatory, many will strongly encourage it. A poll³ of human resource leaders showed that 60% would encourage vaccination prior to returning to the workplace. In response, 56% of employees said that they would get the vaccine if their employer encouraged it.²

Employers play an important role in not only protecting the health of their employees but their communities as well. By giving employees access to vaccines, employers play a role in protecting the public against the virus. It also makes financial sense for employers as they can open their doors to employees and customers in a return to normal operations.

Whether employers mandate vaccines or just seek to make them accessible, they will be seeking partnerships to help them manage the process. Employers will need to provide both access and education to their employees about vaccines and the vaccination process. They will need to determine how and when employees will access vaccines, how they will be tracked and how to ensure compliance with dual-dose regimens. Unfortunately, many employers, especially small businesses, are ill-equipped to handle this daunting task. Most employers lack the resources and tools to properly manage, track and report employee vaccinations. In fact, 47% of HR leaders and C-level professionals said that administrative concerns were preventing them from mandating COVID-19 vaccines.⁴





Commercial Market Strategy: Deploying Resources

These challenges present a significant opportunity for hospitals and health systems. Community providers have the resources, personnel and trust to provide vaccine counseling, education, administration, tracking and reporting of COVID-19 vaccines. Health systems can leverage their resources into a commercial market vaccination strategy as they are able to provide the following to employers:

- On-site events that make it easier and more convenient to administer vaccines to employees. Employees will not need to take time off work or wait in long lines at a retail pharmacy to be vaccinated. On-site events also make it easier to ensure that employees receive their follow-up dose by scheduling appointments and registering employees for second dose events.
- Trained personnel to administer the vaccine. Hospital staff routinely provide on-site biometric screenings and vaccinations and are trained in the administration and handling of vaccines, including maintaining strict adherence to vaccine temperatures and expirations. These clinicians know the proper screening questions to ask as well how to monitor employees for potential side effects post-vaccine.
- Providing education to employees. Trained hospital personnel can answer questions and provide education about the vaccine, doses and side effects. Hospitals and health systems can also help employers educate and encourage their staff to receive the vaccine by providing handouts, posters, links to online resources, emails and other educational campaign materials to prepare employees for vaccination. Health systems may also consider utilizing a clinician to provide an in-person or virtual townhall to provide information and answer questions.
- Handling of tracking and reporting so that employer HR staff is not responsible for doing so. Health systems can track employee vaccinations and not only report them back to the employer, but also to state registries and the health system's EMR. Employers will be able to maintain vaccination records for their staff while not having to worry about reporting them to the appropriate authorities. These reports can also assist employers in tracking vaccinations should they choose to incentivize employees for doing so.

Growing High Margin Health System Revenue

Another significant opportunity for health systems is the revenue potential as COVID-19 vaccinations represent a high-margin opportunity. With total reimbursement of \$45.33 per member for a dual-dose regimen and \$28.39 for a single dose vaccine, health systems can achieve revenues by deploying vaccination events, especially to local employer groups who are anxious to bring employees back to work.

At the same time, employers are looking to achieve cost savings by ensuring that their employees stay healthy and avoid costly hospitalizations and other emergent care. Data from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association (BSBSA)⁶ showed that the average cost of COVID-19 outpatient care was between \$500 to \$1,000 per member. However, members who were hospitalized with the virus incurred costs that were 45 times higher, and a stay in the ICU raised costs an additional 2.5 times. These hospitalizations are significant costs to an employer, especially one who is self-funded. Even for employees who do not require medical care for COVID-19, there are costs associated with lost productivity and missed work.

The Solution



How bMetrix Helps Hospitals and Health Systems

bMetrix streamlines the vaccination process by allowing for customized parameters and workflows, allowing for the vaccination of more members. bMetrix also helps with reimbursement by tracking invoicing for the billing of federally allowed administration fees.

bMetrix COVID-19 Inoculation Management, Member Communication and Reporting software is a turnkey solution to assist hospitals and health systems in managing and tracking COVID-19 vaccinations. bMetrix can assist health systems with their commercial market vaccination strategy by simplifying the vaccination process using proven technology.

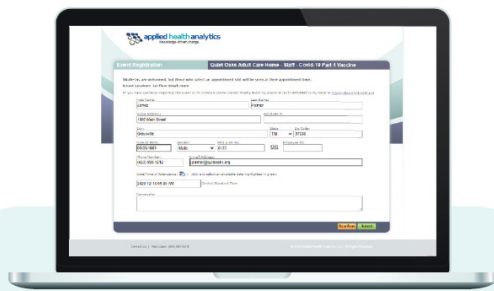
bMetrix offers features to help speed vaccination administration and accurately record data:

- **Easy registration:** Members can register for vaccination events via eligibility file, emailed registration links or at on-site check-in.
- **Customizable:** Offers the ability to customize workflows and set vaccine parameters, reducing setup time, expediting vaccine administration and ensuring data accuracy.
- **Data Interoperability:** Connects vaccination data to EMRs and state registries in compliance with state and federal reporting requirements.
- **Versatile:** Ability to document and report a variety of encounters and vaccine types, including COVID-19 and influenza.
- **Member Communication:** Informs members or groups of members about vaccination events and second dose information through email, all within a single platform.
- **Invoicing:** Tracks member vaccinations for single and dual-dose regimens for billing of federally allowed administration fees.



How bMetrix Helps Employers

bMetrix makes it easy for hospitals and health systems to help employers vaccinate and track vaccine data for their employees. Employers can be set-up quickly in the bMetrix application using an eligibility file and vaccination reports can be easily downloaded to track employee vaccination progress.



Health Systems can use bMetrix to send emails to employees notifying them of upcoming vaccination events and allow them to easily register online. Employees who do not pre-register can still register on-site at the screening event via bMetrix check-in. bMetrix tracks which employees have received the first dose and sends reminders about the second dose.

bMetrix offers solutions to assist in vaccinating an employer's workforce:

- **Vaccine Registration:** Members can pre-register for vaccination events via an eligibility file, emailed registration link or at on-site check-in.
- **Member Communication:** Emails can be sent to individuals or groups regarding vaccination events and second dose appointments.
- **Easy Reporting:** Vaccination data is easily downloaded in a CSV report that can be provided to the employer to determine who has and has not been vaccinated, and is connected to EMRs to update the employee's record at the health system level.
- **Member Education:** Ability to disseminate important vaccination information via email.

Applied Health Analytics can assist in developing your commercial market vaccination strategy by identifying employers in your area who may be interested in vaccinating their employees. [To learn more and to schedule a demo of bMetrix, visit appliedhealth.net/covid-vaccine/.](https://appliedhealth.net/covid-vaccine/)

Building Partnerships with Applied Health Analytics

Applied Health Analytics can help create a strategic plan to reach employers who are looking for expert guidance on vaccine administration. Once the partnership is formed, Applied Health Analytics links proprietary risk analytics and engagement technology with health system resources to offer employers a complete array of evidence-based, early detection and prevention initiatives. Utilizing Applied Health Analytics' technology, employers can identify high-risk conditions that are prevalent in their employee population and create wellbeing programs to address these health needs. **Learn more at appliedhealth.net.**

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