



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

January 30, 2023  
(House Rules)

## STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

### H.R. 497 – A bill to eliminate the COVID-19 vaccine mandate on health care providers furnishing items and services under certain Federal health care programs

(Rep. Duncan, R-SC, and 67 cosponsors)

Protecting vulnerable patients across the country from the devastating effects of COVID-19 remains a top priority for the Administration. Therefore, the Administration strongly opposes the Freedom for Health Care Workers Act, which would expose patients to unnecessary risk.

The Administration's requirement that health care facilities that participate in Medicare or Medicaid establish policies and procedures to ensure covered staff are vaccinated against COVID-19 protects the lives of patients, along with the health care workers that provide them care, at 76,000 medical facilities nationwide. Ensuring patient safety and quality of care is a critical responsibility of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, and COVID-19 vaccination requirements for health care workers are key to combatting the evolving circumstances of COVID-19. As the Supreme Court said with respect to this rule, "[E]nsuring that providers take steps to avoid transmitting a dangerous virus to their patients is consistent with the fundamental principle of the medical profession: first, do no harm."

Vaccines remain one of our strongest tools to fight against COVID-19 and protect individuals from serious illness, hospitalization, and death. Health care workers may work on a daily basis with vulnerable populations, and the virus in health care settings continues to pose a significant risk to health care workers and their patients. Health care staff being unable to work because of COVID-19 further strains the health care system and limits patients' access to safe and essential care.

While COVID-19 is no longer the disruptive threat that it once was, it makes no sense for Congress to reverse this protection for vulnerable patients, as well as our health care workers who have given so much to protect us. A vote for this bill threatens the lives of patients and health care workers alike.

If Congress were to pass H.R. 497, the President would veto it.

\* \* \* \* \*