




## Rhode Island Department of Health

### MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** James McDonald, MD, MPH

**FROM:** Lauren Gareau, MPH, Rules Coordinator 

**SUBJECT:** Hearing of Immunization, Testing and Health Screening of Health Care Workers (216-RICR-20-15-7)

**DATE:** March 11, 2022

On March 8, 2022, the Rhode Island Department of Health held a hearing for the regulation Immunization, Testing and Health Screening of Health Care Workers (216-RICR-20-15-7) at 4pm via Zoom. Approximately 100 people were in attendance to either listen or provide testimony. Around 30 people presented oral testimony on the proposed regulations with most agreeing with the policy change to allow an alternative to COVID-19 vaccination but stating that it does not go far enough. Testimony included requests that the permanent regulation reflect proof of natural immunity as an option to being vaccinated or wearing an N95 and that religious exemptions and expanded medical exemptions be allowable. Several people provided testimony imploring the Department to implement mechanisms to have healthcare facilities reinstate health care workers who were fired as a result of the emergency regulation and to provide those individuals backpay. A few also indicated that there was an unfair financial burden on health care facilities to have to provide N95s instead of surgical masks. A couple of individuals asked that the regulation be clearer on how long health care facilities would be required to document vaccination status, who the regulation applied to (including some aversion to facilities, such as assisted living residences, being included), and if there would be a testing option. The hearing concluded at 5:29pm.