September 23, 2021

The Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts Releases Statement on Governor Baker’s Announcement Implementing a Vaccination requirement for Home Care Workers.

Since COVID-19 first emerged last year, the home care industry and its workforce have endured incredible challenges adjusting to changes in the delivery of home-based health care. Direct-care home care workers courageously met the needs of the vulnerable populations they serve, all in the face of uncertainty and the unknowns of a novel respiratory virus. The Home Care Alliance has worked diligently with its members, prior to the mandate, to educate the workforce and improve rates of voluntary vaccinations.

Governor Baker’s announcement implementing a vaccination requirement for home care workers marks a significant step in the public health response to the pandemic. The Board of Directors of the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts voted this week to support the Governor’s action, regarding it as an important step in keeping the workforce and the people receiving care in their homes safe from infection. The FDA’s vaccine approval was an important factor in the Board’s decision.

“With all of the workforce challenges our industry is facing, we must do all we can to protect and support our workforce,” said Pat Kelleher, the Home Care Alliance’s Executive Director. “A fully vaccinated workforce is important, but so are ongoing infection control training, personal protective equipment, and support for such things as transportation and childcare. In order for these workers to perform their jobs safely, we need to ensure all aspects of their well-being are considered and cared for, including vaccination.”

As the vaccination mandate rolls out, the Home Care Alliance will be seeking additional guidance on exemptions, testing and alignment with the new federal mandate announced recently by President Biden. HCA encourages that the mandate applies to all home care workers, not just those directly in caregiving roles.

Finally, HCA believes it is imperative that the industry and the Baker Administration monitor any impact that these new requirements may have on providers’ ability to meet the home care needs of our patients and clients and that we take swift action to ensure that workforce supply doesn’t deteriorate any further, restricting access to home care services for those who need them.

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About the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts:
With a mission to unite people and organizations to advance community health through care and services in the home, the Home Care Alliance of Massachusetts is a non-profit trade association and advocacy group providing representation, education, communication, advocacy and – ultimately – a voice for the state’s home health industry. Founded in 1969, the Alliance has grown to represent more
than 180 home care and home health agencies across the state who serve over 200,000 clients annually. For more information, visit www.thinkhomecare.org.