



*Position Statement on COVID Vaccine Employer Decision Making
November 3rd, 2021*

Employers in North Dakota, especially those in the health care and human service fields, are in the best position to determine how to keep employees and the people they serve safe. Health care and human services providers are already one of the most highly regulated industries by the state and federal government, and Anne Carlsen opposes additional regulation by the state limiting its ability to implement best practices designed to keep the people they serve and their employees safe.

We provide care for some of the most vulnerable children in the state, and we are currently serving 10 children and young adults who are on ventilators, and others who are immunocompromised. In addition to their medical challenges, many are also ineligible based on age to receive the vaccine, and so have very limited protections. We've shared with our staff that our intent is not to infringe on staff's personal freedoms or medical decision making, however, we have a moral and ethical responsibility to ensure to the best of our abilities that we keep the individuals we serve and those who support them safe, healthy, and protected from this virus. This is best achieved by abiding by the best evidence-based medical practices, including vaccination for highly transmissible diseases like COVID 19.

The state taking away our ability to require our valued and already impacted workforce to get vaccinated compromises our ability to keep the people we serve safe and to keep our remaining workforce healthy. For Anne Carlsen, we must take situations like this very seriously because children's lives hang in the balance with these decisions.

It also likely compromises our ability to participate in the Medicaid program, which is the critical safety net program for nearly all the children and families we serve. Compromising our participation in Medicaid would be devastating to our organization and could seriously jeopardize our ability to continue the work and legacy of this 80-year-old organization.

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