



MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

**FAQS ON COVID VACCINATIONS
AND
MTNA STATE AND LOCAL ASSOCIATION EVENTS**

T. Scott Gilligan
MTNA Legal Counsel

With the COVID vaccination rates for American adults exceeding 50%, MTNA state and local affiliated association presidents and other leaders have raised a number of questions about mandatory vaccination policies for attendees, students, volunteers and adjudicators at events such as competitions, festivals and conferences. MTNA addresses these questions below.

1. *May music associations prohibit unvaccinated individuals from attending conferences, meetings and competitions?*

It will depend upon the law of the state where the conference, meeting or competition will be held. For example, Alabama passed a law in May, 2021 which prohibits private businesses (like music associations) from denying their services or entry into their facilities to persons on the basis that they have not been vaccinated against COVID. There are similar bills pending in a handful of states to outlaw mandatory vaccination requirements finding that they discriminate against those who choose not to receive a vaccination. However, in an overwhelming number of states, associations will be able to restrict conferences, meetings and competitions to those who have been vaccinated. MTNA-affiliated associations should check their state laws prior to adopting a policy and should be prepared to alter the policy because laws can change quickly in this environment.

Even in states that do restrict an association from excluding the unvaccinated from in-person attendance, appropriate safety measures can still be mandated such as face masks and social distancing.

2. *If a music association is located in a state which does not restrict mandatory vaccination policies, does the music association have to recognize the same medical and religious exemptions as employers do?*

Yes. The religious and medical exemption would still apply since music association events would be covered by the public accommodations provisions of the Americans

with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Civil Rights laws. If a student or attendee claimed a religious or medical exemption from receiving the vaccine, the music association would have to make reasonable accommodations such as attendance by Zoom or allowing them to attend with face masks and social distancing.

3. *May music associations require that adjudicators, paid or unpaid, be vaccinated in order to adjudicate at an in-person event?*

Yes, although in a couple of states it may be difficult to enforce. Currently, in all states, a music association is permitted to have a policy that all of its adjudicators, paid or unpaid, must be vaccinated in order to judge a competition. However, in a couple of states, like Alabama and Iowa, it is against the law for a private business to require an individual to show proof of a COVID vaccination. Therefore, while music associations in Alabama and Iowa may adopt policies requiring all adjudicators to be vaccinated, the law in those two states would prohibit the association from requiring the adjudicator to show proof of a COVID vaccination.

As we have noted, this is an area of law that is greatly in flux. MTNA-affiliated associations should always check the latest legislative activity in their home states before adopting COVID vaccination policies.

For further assistance, please contact the MTNA National Headquarters at mtnanet@mtna.org or 1-888-512-5278.