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“Governor Lemanu Amends Emergency Declaration and Mandates Full Vaccination for All Executive Branch Employees.”

On November 1, 2021, Governor Lemanu issued the first amendment to the recent iteration of the Declaration of Ongoing Public Health Emergency and State of Emergency dated October 8, 2021.

The amendment states that the full course of COVID-19 vaccination is now mandatory for all "Executive Branch employees of the American Samoa government, including but not limited to career service employees, political appointees, and contract employees." Semi-autonomous agencies will adopt rules for their COVID 19 vaccine requirements.

Governor Lemanu states, "I want to thank the public for their patience and support. As you know, the American Samoa Government has launched incentive programs, stressed personal responsibility, deployed mobile vaccination units, and coordinated with the Office of Samoan Affairs, villages, and private sector partners to increase American Samoa's vaccination rate. However, our numbers have not reached our goal of 90% of our total population being fully vaccinated, which is a goal recommended by our medical team. The virus continues to spread across the world, and numbers of infections, hospitalizations and deaths are much higher among unvaccinated populations." He continues, "This is not an easy decision for any leader to make, but I want to commend the Lieutenant Governor/GAR as well as members of the COVID-19 Task Force for their courage to move forward and present all options and findings on how to increase American Samoa's vaccination rate and awareness responsibly. The COVID-19 Task Force, Department of Health and partners will continue to implement different approaches with the hope that more of our residents would consider becoming fully vaccinated. Based on recommendations from the Task Force, an ASG employees vaccine requirement will increase our vaccination numbers."

The employees have **until December 15, 2021**, to provide proof of a full course of COVID-19 vaccination to the Director of the Department of Human Resources (DHR). Departments and agencies can also collect proof of vaccination from their employees on behalf of DHR. The

amendment states that the "full course" of vaccination which requires two shots are reminded that the recommended interval between doses are 21 days for Pfizer and 28 days for Moderna. "An employee would need to receive the first Pfizer dose by November 24 and the first Moderna dose by November 17" in order to have the second shot by December 15, 2021.

Any executive branch employee who fails to provide proof of the full course of COVID 19 vaccination **by December 15** and has not shown one of three exceptions for physical disability, medical and sincere religious belief, will be suspended from the job until employee provides proof of having the full course of COVID 19 vaccination. They will no longer be allowed to enter "government-owned or leased building, vehicle, or enter any worksite or location where they will be in the presence of other ASG employees or members of the public in the course of their employment." While in suspension, the employee may use their accumulated annual or sick leave. Otherwise, their suspension will be without pay.

Full vaccination is required for anyone 16 years and older entering American Samoa. The term "full vaccination" is defined as a person "who has received the full course of vaccination and 14 or more days have elapsed after the final administration of the vaccine."

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