

# **My Concerns Regarding the Mandate of Vaccination of Kettering Health Staff Against Covid-19**

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I would like to start by saying how much I enjoy my job and how great of an experience it has been working for Kettering health for the last six years. It has allowed me to learn great career skills in the world of materials management and logistical supply in the operation of hospitals, as well as general skills concerning supply chain that could easily be applied to other areas and facilities in the near future. My time with Kettering has been quite enjoyable and fulfilling. I want to say how great I think it is that Kettering health has allowed a place for people to share their concerns about the recent vaccine mandate. That being said, I was very surprised to see the COVID vaccination mandate email appear in my inbox at 4:30PM on Thursday, August 5th just as I was wrapping up and getting ready to leave for the day. I am uneasy with the information and presentation Kettering has about the vaccination in the form of the vaccine FAQ that was posted in the email asking people to voice their concerns. I feel that by mandating this vaccine, Kettering health is taking exceptionally high risks with the lives of their patients and their workers. The life of the Kettering Health as a company as well as the great reputation Kettering has worked hard to build with the communities it serves comes into question too. There are too many unknown factors involved with the safety of this vaccine and that the mandate could do irreparable damage to Kettering health as the face of healthcare in southwest Ohio. The following is why I believe Kettering health should not mandate, and instead rescind their mandate order of the COVID-19 vaccination of their staff. Something like a reoccurring COVID test, like other businesses and the city of Dayton are doing, would be a better less intrusive and less discriminatory option (WHIO, 2021).

The vaccine FAQ has several bullet points I would like to address as they range from contradictory to lacking in information and flat out misleading. It is good that Kettering is trying

to keep its staff thoroughly informed about what is going on and bullet point FAQs are a great way to do it. At the time of writing, the main FAQ has been updated and changed to clarify questions staff had and it is good to see that Kettering is trying to keep fluid with the new information constantly coming out about the COVID-19 virus. However, there are a few bullet points that still concern me.

I will start with bullet point three in the vaccine FAQ. “Are the COVID 19 vaccines rigorously tested?” Kettering says yes and that “tens of thousands study participants” in the clinical trials have generated the data to determine that the vaccines are safe (2021). And that clinical trials are still going on and generating even more data. At the time of this writing, the FDA has approved emergency use of the Pfizer, Moderna, and Janssen COVID-19 vaccines. My question to this is, rigorously tested compared to what? On average it takes a drug twelve years to get approved by the FDA (Van Norman, 2016). The vaccines were approved for emergency use in less than one year. There is pressure put on the CDC, FDA, and other healthcare agencies to come up with a solution during a pandemic to be sure. The phases of FDA testing and clinical trials are there for a reason. Phase one clinical testing, if a drug even makes it to clinical trials, takes several months. Phase two last about two years, while phase three trials take one to four years to complete.

I'd like to focus on phase three of a drugs testing, the long-term testing phase. The number of people in phase three trials can range from three hundred up to three thousand. But no one knows what a full phase three style trial of the vaccines would look like because they have not been around that long. No one can say for sure what the effects of the COVID vaccine will

be in four years and that is very concerning.

Drugs also get pulled off the market even after FDA approval due to later long-term effects not found during trial time. A Pfizer anti-inflammatory drug, Bextra, was approved by the FDA in 2001 after undergoing the regular approval process and in 2005 was taken off the market (Fields, 2009). The drug was recalled for adverse heart effects including death, heart attack, and stroke. It also increased the risk of serious skin reactions like epidermal necrolysis. The FDA cited lack of long-term data on the safety of the drug as a major reason for the recall and that was after the normal approval process (Fields, 2009).

In terms of other comparable vaccines, the polio vaccine stands out in terms of similar development circumstance and time, as both were developed during a pandemic. The polio vaccine had a short development time of about a single year but was tested, by and large, much more rigorously than the COVID vaccine. The polio vaccine was tested on 1.8 million people before it was approved for general use to the public (History, 2021). I would be much more comfortable getting a COVID vaccine if it was tested anywhere near as much compared to the polio vaccine before being approved for public use. I do not feel comfortable with the rushed development time or comparatively limited trials the COVID vaccine has had.

In point four of the vaccine FAQ the question “Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe?” Kettering assures that because they are approved by the FDA for emergency use that they are safe (2021). Again, I stress that comparatively, the vaccines trial is quite small. Kettering also claims “the CDC and FDA will continue to monitor individuals who have received the vaccine to ensure

there is no evidence of even rare safety issues” (2021). This part is confusing to me as there are major safety issues and side effects. Am I to believe that Kettering supports taking a drug that is in ongoing trials and being constantly monitored? It just seems odd in general to me for a healthcare network to mandate taking an experimental drug that is currently in trials and being monitored. Mandating an experimental drug means it is clinical research without consent (Ilfeld, 2006).

Another concern about this statement is the generalization about the fatality and debilitation of COVID-19. According to the CDC, there are thousands of reports of myocarditis and pericarditis (CDC, 2021). These complications arise in young men, which is the demographic I fall into (CDC, 2021). My family has a history of heart issues which makes the possible side effects more disconcerting. Granted, the CDC claims it is a small chance of that side effect happening, but again, due to limited testing, there is limited knowledge of long-term side effects. This side effect only just started being reported two months ago (CDC 2021). The ongoing COVID situation is ever changing, and with a major side effects like that, I believe a vaccine mandate to be a potentially dangerous.

According to Johns Hopkins, as of 8/12/2021 the COVID case fatality ratio of the United States is 1.7%. That is 36,190,179 total COVID -19 cases and 618,479 confirmed deaths (Johns Hopkins). Using these numbers if we assume you were unfortunate and caught the COVID-19 virus. That would put the general survival rate at 98.3%. COVID can be debilitating and deadly, but compared to something like heart disease, which is one of the leading causes of death in the United States and at least something more relevant to me, given the health issues that run in my

family, COVID-19's 98.3% survival rate seems much better compared to the heart disease 75.9% survival rate.

Point Fifteen is about the length of the effectiveness of the vaccine. It says "How long will the vaccine be effective?" Kettering claims "The duration of the protection from the vaccine is unknown, but is likely to be longer than the immunity from having had COVID-19" (2021). This is confusing when taken with points three and twenty-two. Kettering does not know the duration of effectiveness, but also knows that the vaccines are rigorously tested? Wouldn't rigorous testing also show or at least give some idea of length of effectiveness? Kettering also states in point nine of the vaccine FAQ that "independent boards of experts looked at the placebo and vaccine participants and reported that the vaccines are 95% effective." How long does that 95% effectiveness last? Does it gradually drop off over time? Does it tank down into the single digits after a week? I do not see the point in mandating a vaccine when the company mandating it does not know how long it is effective for. Which again makes me worried about the long term side effects.

Point twenty of the vaccine FAQ asks, "What are the long-term side effects of getting the vaccine?" Kettering claims "There have been no significant long-term side effects reported so far, after about 6 months of clinical trials" (2021). This worries me because of things like the heart inflammation side effect I previously mentioned (CDC, 2021). Six months from when this FAQ was written that statement was probably correct, but is currently false as of 8/12/2021.

I would now like to discuss point twenty-one in the vaccine FAQ concerning liability. As

I find it to be a bit misleading. Point twenty-three states, “Do the vaccine manufactures have any liability for near- or long-term side effects?” Kettering claims “While the vaccine manufacturers are shielded from liability, there is a federal program called the National Vaccine Injury Program which handles such claims” (2021). While I am sure that federal program does good work, this seems to me to shift the idea of liability away from Kettering. This brings me to what I believe to be a massive risk to Kettering health in terms of its liability to its patients and staff concerning this vaccine mandate. Yes it is perfectly legal for a company to mandate vaccination for its staff, but by doing so that company also accepts legal liability of bad reactions and even death caused by it.

As set precedence by the Ohio supreme court case of THE SPICER MANUFACTURING CO. v. TUCKER decided in January 10<sup>th</sup> 1934 (casetext, n.d). William Tucker was employed by The Spicer Manufacturing Company and received a smallpox vaccination from the company physician. After suffering an infection and later death caused by the injection of the smallpox vaccine, his widow Nellie Tucker, filed a workers compensation claim that eventually made it to the Ohio supreme court. They ruled in her favor. The ruling was based mainly on that the employer required the employee to obtain the vaccine as a condition of employment. Compare to the case of Rolsen v. Walgreens Co. in the eighth district court of Cuyahoga in December of 2016 (Justia, n.d). Thomas J. Rolsen filed a workers compensation claim against Wall-greens over an adverse reaction to the pneumonia vaccine. The ruling was against Rolsen because the vaccine was not mandated simply encouraged. Mandating the COVID-19 vaccine for all staff, contractors, and volunteers risks a potentially large amount of lawsuits that have historically ruled against the employer. This potentially creates a conflict of

interest. Because Kettering is itself a healthcare provider, it would have an inherent interest to not acknowledge any damages caused by the vaccine that Kettering mandated and maybe even provided in some cases. This doesn't just apply to Kettering but all other hospitals that are mandating the vaccine as well.

There is currently a bill making its way through the Ohio house of representatives that would make vaccination mandates illegal under Ohio law outside of specific circumstances (Gross, 2021). This is house bill 248. It is currently in committee, with a number of the proponents being doctors themselves. Its concerning that Kettering is pushing the mandate at the same time that legislation is currently being worked on to make such mandates illegal. It almost looks as if Kettering is pushing the mandate specifically before such a bill has time to fully go through the legislative process.

Now I would like to talk about the reputation of Kettering Health and how this mandate would effect the reputation of Kettering Health in a negative way.. This saddens me because after working for Kettering health for six years, I have seen the amount of planning, time, and effort the staff and team put into this company. With as aggressive as a mandate of a vaccine makes Kettering look, it might give the potential patient the wrong idea of Kettering. They might think that if Kettering is going as far as to terminate long time employees over the COVID vaccine, that Kettering holds an entirely negative view of the non-vaccinated and that might affect the quality of care they would receive. This could cause potential patients to turn to other health care providers or maybe not seek any care at all. It also might come off as discriminatory against minority communities that are well known to be vaccine hesitant and with historically sound

reasons (CDC, 2021).

There is also the topic of rumors employees themselves hear in the halls of their facilities. For example, a rumor of Kettering health Dayton also known as Grandview medical center, denying all of their filed religious exemptions. This is especially concerning as Kettering presents itself as a faith-based network. I have no way to know for sure if there is any truth to that rumor, but I am sure I am not the only person who has heard it. Word of mouth is important for maintaining a positive community presence and image, doubly so if those words are coming from current or former employees.

Kettering health and even more specifically Soin Medical Center have a reputation as innovators leading the way in modern healthcare solutions. I have seen it time and time again in company town halls, department meetings, and general advertising that this is a point Kettering health prides themselves in. I can not help but see this mandate as anything but following the herd and being completely contradictory to one of the major messages of Kettering Health.

It almost seems counter to the mission statement of Kettering health to mandate this vaccine. As Kettering's mission is “to follow in the steps of Jesus by guiding every person to their best health. In addition to the latest medical treatments, you’ll find a team of caregivers dedicated to supporting your spiritual and emotional well-being. Our mission is to improve the quality of life of the people in the communities we serve through healthcare and education” (2021). From what research and studies I have read about the vaccine, I am not convinced that it is a “path to my best health” and feels quite the opposite to supporting my “spiritually and

emotional well being” It also seems quite contrary to the message of Christ to force people into anything, but especially an injection that would effect their ability to partake in the exchange of goods and labor.

This is a golden opportunity for Kettering to innovate and be the first local network that I know of to introduce an alternative COVID testing option, such as weekly tests. The city of Dayton does this for their employees (WHIO, 2021). Kettering has great policies already in place for handling the unfortunate situation of an employee getting COVID. This would strengthen the image of Kettering as it would look nondiscriminatory and would show Kettering is willing to work with people and adapt along with the ever changing COVID situation.

Should Kettering rescind this mandate there is yet another amazing opportunity for them. It is no secret that there is a large shortage of healthcare professionals even in the best of times. Because of this mandate people quit to seek other employment even before the deadline. I would not be surprised if it is happening at other networks as well that have also mandated the vaccine. If Kettering rescinds this mandate, I am sure the previous employees would be more than happy to come back, but also the trained medical staff of other vaccine mandated hospitals would be more than happy to find a new home with Kettering.

Working for Kettering has been an amazing experience and been a great learning opportunity. Its admirable to see Kettering trying to take actions to combat the virus, and giving employees a way to voice their concerns is absolutely the right thing to do. The development and testing time are a concern for me. The serious side effects, or lack thereof as Kettering claims,

are a concern for me. The massive amount of liability Kettering is potentially taking on is a concern for me. The aggressiveness and timing of this mandate with limited presented alternatives is concerning to me. The changing image and public perception of Kettering and by extension what it means to be a Kettering employee are concerning to me. As a proud employee of Kettering Health for the last six years, these are all of my concerns about the employee mandate of the COVID-19 vaccine.

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