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Kline & Specter Requiring COVID Boosters for Staff

BY JUSTIN HENRY

Of the Legal Staff

Philadelphia-based personal injury law firm Kline & Specter is requiring all 150 employees to get the COVID-19 booster shot, which is expected to become available late next month, pending approval from federal regulators.

One of the first Philadelphia law firms to issue a COVID-19 vaccine mandate, Kline & Specter said the recently announced vaccine policy follows advice from federal health officials urging Americans to get the booster eight months after receiving their second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. Firm leaders announced the updated policy Aug. 19.

The policy update comes after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released studies last week that federal

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health officials say provide evidence that booster shots of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna coronavirus vaccines would be needed in the coming months. Federal health officials said the boosters are necessary to protect against the highly contagious delta variant, as data indicates that immunity from the initial vaccine weakens over time.

However, the availability of boosters to the general adult population is still subject

to data review and subsequent endorsement by both the Food and Drug Administration and an advisory committee of the CDC. Assuming federal regulators give their blessing, all adults who got one of the mRNA vaccines will be eligible for boosters eight months after their second shot, beginning Sept. 20.

But for Kline & Specter founding partner Shanin Specter, the CDC's call for the extra dose is "all the government action needed for an employer to decide whether to require vaccines for their staff."

"Our employees deserve as much notice as we can give them about our policies,

especially with regard to the pandemic, which is a sensitive issue for many people, and understandably so," Specter said in an interview with Legal affiliate Law.com on Aug. 19. "We want to continue to lead on this issue, both among law firms and among employers generally."

Firm leaders at Kline & Specter said in a statement all but seven employees have received their first rounds of vaccines. Those employees, who Specter said requested an exemption for medical or religious reasons, have been required to report to work on a separate floor in the firm's office at 1525 Locust St., where they are required to wear

masks in accordance with Philadelphia city health guidelines.

From a low point in new cases at the beginning of June, the U.S. has seen a gradual increase in COVID-19 cases, largely driven by the highly contagious Delta variant. On June 5, the new case count for the entire country was at a low point of 6,153. It hit 162,724 on Aug. 18, according to public health data gathered by The New York Times.

In Pennsylvania, data shows the state had a low point of 75 new cases July 6, which has since climbed to 2,386 on Aug. 18.

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