

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 19, 2023

The Honorable Kathy Hochul  
Governor of New York State  
NYS Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Hochul:

We write to you today with deep concern about disastrous staffing shortages that are hampering our state's healthcare system and impeding New Yorkers from accessing quality care. While the shortages have been an ongoing issue, they continue to be exacerbated by New York's draconian COVID-19 vaccine mandate for healthcare workers, which has forced nearly 34,000 healthcare workers out of their jobs.<sup>1</sup> This has resulted in severe financial distress for New York hospitals and increased barriers to care for those in need.

As of December 7, 2022, there were 9,300 job openings for nurses throughout New York.<sup>2</sup> In one recent survey of New York hospitals<sup>3</sup>, 100% reported a shortage of nursing staff, while 49% reported "reducing and/or eliminating services to mitigate staffing challenges." 27% even reported a risk of defaulting on existing loans, which could further impact available patient care. These statistics are striking and certainly should serve as a call-to-action for your administration.

Furthermore, we have heard directly from hospital administrators and healthcare workers about the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 vaccine mandate, including its exacerbation of the staffing shortage. For example, Alternate Level of Care patients, who require long-term care, are crowding our hospitals because long-term care facilities are lacking the staff needed to keep their beds open. Meanwhile, providers are spending exponentially more on staffing costs. This cannot go on any longer.

The evidence is clear: the staffing shortage affecting New York's healthcare sector is a crisis and must be addressed. While long-term solutions must also be considered, it is imperative for your administration to drop its COVID-19 vaccine mandate immediately so that healthcare workers can return to serving their friends, loved ones, and neighbors. Decades of healthcare experience are being left on the sidelines or pushed into other states as a result of the mandate. This is even more noteworthy given that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control Director has publicly stated that the vaccine cannot prevent transmission<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lohud.com/story/news/coronavirus/2021/10/14/how-many-health-workers-lost-jobs-due-ny-vaccine-mandate/8449413002/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.timesunion.com/news/article/Hospital-staff-shortages-have-reached-a-crisis-17637960.php>


<sup>3</sup> [https://www.hanys.org/communications/publications/critical\\_condition/docs/2022\\_critical\\_condition\\_report.pdf#page=3](https://www.hanys.org/communications/publications/critical_condition/docs/2022_critical_condition_report.pdf#page=3)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/medical/cdc-director-covid-vaccines-cant-prevent-transmission-anymore/ar-AASDndg>

Therefore, we urge you to immediately rescind the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for healthcare workers in New York. Our communities and hospitals need your support, not your burdensome mandates, as they continue to operate under historic staffing shortages.

Sincerely,

  
CLAUDIA TENNEY  
Member of Congress

  
ANTHONY D'ESPOSITO  
Member of Congress

  
GEORGE SANTOS  
Member of Congress

  
MICHAEL LAWLER  
Member of Congress

  
NICK LALOTA  
Member of Congress

  
ELISE STEFANIK  
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NICOLE MALLIOTAKIS  
Member of Congress

  
ANDREW R. GARBARINO  
Member of Congress

  
NICK LANGWORTHY  
Member of Congress

  
MARC MOLINARO  
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