

**From:** [kathryn hayes](#)  
**To:** [Joseph P. Filippi](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment Submission for August 10 Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, August 9, 2021 2:35:09 PM

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Dear Nevada State Board of Health Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on mandatory vaccinations for the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). I am a soon-to-be first year law student at Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and I am in strong support of the Board of Health requiring vaccinations and testing for university and college students.

Firstly, the daily new cases across the state are higher today (08/09/2021) at 981 than they were a year ago (08/09/2020) at 727 despite vaccines being readily available (according to [nevadahealthresponsenv.gov](http://nevadahealthresponsenv.gov)). Universities were operating majorly on a distance model at this time last year, and yet we are preparing for a school year where more classes are supposed to be taking place in person. A vaccine mandate and regular testing can allow in-person learning to continue in a much safer way. We are already seeing the impact of not having a mandate as half of our first year courses at the law school have moved to an online model. Learning online is difficult for many people based on access, learning ability, and responsibilities at home. It is also difficult on professors who have to adapt their materials in a way that might not be as effective as they usually are when taught in person. Having a fully in-person course load is very important to me, and to several students I have heard from, but we need a mandate in order for the university to allow this to happen.

Secondly, a mandate not only allows students to learn better, but it literally saves lives. According to the Southern Nevada Health District as of this writing, the two age groups with the highest number of COVID-19 cases per 100k are ages 18-24 and 25-49. These are the age groups most college, university, graduate, and professional school attendees belong to. The age groups with the lowest vaccination rates are ages 0-19 (which makes sense given no one under the age of 12 is eligible for vaccination) and 20-29. This puts many students at risk of catching and spreading COVID-19, especially with the highly contagious delta variant. Young, healthy people are being hospitalized, which is bad enough. But for people like me with underlying health conditions the possibilities are terrifying.

I am going to finish on a very personal note. I am vaccinated, but due to my condition, I am unsure of how much immunity I really carry. My well-being literally relies on other people to be vaccinated, masked, and tested. I have had to be locked down longer than most people I know, and I had to quit a career that I adored in order to keep myself safe. I really want to be able to go to school and start this next portion of my life. I **need** to be able to go on with my life. I am tired of hearing that "I just need to be more careful than everyone else". What I need is people like you to help protect me. I need people like you to stand up for all of us who are at increased risk, and even those who are not because the Delta Variant doesn't seem to care.

Please seriously consider the necessity of required COVID vaccinations and testing, and urge NSHE to adopt these policies. The lives of your people depend on it.

Sincerely,  
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