



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Stephen Whited  
Chief Executive Officer  
[stephen.whited@mhhs.healthcare](mailto:stephen.whited@mhhs.healthcare)  
304 354-9244

Eric Ritchie  
Chief Operations Officer  
[eric.ritchie@mhhs.healthcare](mailto:eric.ritchie@mhhs.healthcare)  
304 354-9244

## Minnie Hamilton Health System Aligns with West Virginia Hospital Association to Require COVID-19 Vaccine for Staff

Grantsville, WV (August 25, 2021) – Minnie Hamilton Health System is committed to making our hospital and facilities safer for every patient, visitor, and staff member. Aligned with The West Virginia Hospital Association, the Mon Health System, Grafton City Hospital, WVU Medicine and many hospitals across the state and nation, Minnie Hamilton Health System will require COVID-19 vaccinations for employees, like we do annually with influenza vaccinations, with exceptions only for medical and religious reasons.

West Virginia hospitals have seen first-hand the heartbreak COVID-19 has caused for the people in our communities. With the Delta variant on the rise, staying committed to safety is increasingly critical to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

“Minnie Hamilton Health System continues to be committed to keeping our facilities safe for every patient, visitor, resident and staff member. The health and safety of our community, patients, residents, and staff has always been our number one priority,” said Stephen Whited, CEO.

Most recently, we have become very concerned about the Delta variant. It is dangerous, spreads rapidly, and is highly transmissible. Current infection rates are overwhelmingly in unvaccinated people who are being infected with the Delta variant. Similarly, those hospitalized with the COVID-19 virus are more likely to be unvaccinated.

All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be safe and effective at preventing COVID-19 and reducing risk for hospitalization and death. Getting vaccinated is the most effective way to protect yourself and everyone around you. Currently, more than 99% of all US deaths due to COVID-19 are in unvaccinated patients.

Physicians, nurses, and hospital clinical leaders are confident in both the science and safety behind the vaccine, with individual and community benefits strongly outweighing the minimal side effects. More vaccinations mean a lowered chance of transmission, especially for those who are vulnerable and unable to get vaccinated.

“It is clear that the COVID-19 vaccines are our best defense in regard to prevention of infection in both our employees and patients. We must take the lead in this health care struggle. Minnie Hamilton Health System can easily receive vaccines via a federal program, so there are relatively no supply barriers. The vaccines are free and the recent announcement by the FDA regarding the full approval of the Pfizer vaccine is tremendous news,” said Dr. Suresh, Chief of Staff.



Hospital employee vaccinations will maintain the long-term ability of our healthcare system to respond to the pandemic, to safely care for our patients by protecting them from infection and to mitigate the impact of the virus within healthcare facilities and among patients, hospital personnel, and their families and friends.

“It’s essential for Minnie Hamilton Health System along with other West Virginia hospitals and health systems to proactively lead in this critical mission to increase vaccination rates in our state,” said Stephen Whited, CEO. “We encourage all West Virginians to receive the vaccine to help us reduce COVID-19 transmission rates and protect our families, friends, and neighbors.”

To learn more about the COVID-19 Vaccine, please call WV Residents COVID-19 Info Line 1-833-734-0965 or visit [www.vaccinate.wv.gov](http://www.vaccinate.wv.gov). To schedule a vaccination at Minnie Hamilton Health System, please call 304 354-9704 or 304-462-3407.

**About Minnie Hamilton Health System:** Minnie Hamilton Health System is a comprehensive, vertically integrated health care delivery system comprised of a critical access hospital, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), Rural Health Centers, school-based health centers, a nursing home, dental clinics, and behavioral health clinics, located in Calhoun and Gilmer Counties, WV. Our mission is the dedication to improving the health quality of life of all people in our service area through an innovative delivery system of services and education; we do this through teamwork and dedication of staff, and our commitment to work with our community partners. Minnie Hamilton Health System collaborates with many organizations, including larger health systems, to provide the necessary services our communities rely on. Those organizations include but are not limited to Mon Health System, WVU Medicine, University Health Associates, Charleston Area Medical Center, Glenville State College, Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department, Marshall University, West Virginia University, Gilmer County Health Department, Mid-Ohio Valley Rural Health Alliance, Westbrook, and many others. For more information visit [www.mhhs.healthcare](http://www.mhhs.healthcare)