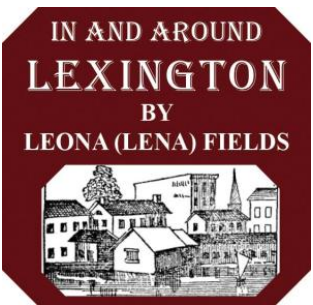


# Workers protest Mississippi hospital’s COVID vaccine mandate

OXFORD, Miss. (AP) — Some employees are protesting a Mississippi hospital’s mandate that all of its workers get vaccinated against COVID-19, even as the state has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the U.S. and has experienced a sharp increase in coronavirus cases



Tuesday, I went to Jitney Pharmacy (Drug Store) to pick up my medicine. Mr. Billy Russell was filling prescriptions. He told me to make sure I put in my column that people need to go get their shots for COVID-19. I told him I would be sure I put the message in and let the public know he’s concerned about peoples’ health. I agree 100% with Mr. Russell, people need to get their shots, if they have not had them. Now it’s time for the booster shots. People 12 years old and older, please, please, go get your vaccine. The other workers in the drug store agreed with us about people needing to get the COVID-19 vaccine.

Parents, you are responsible for the health of you children. Go get your vaccine and make sure your children get theirs. Young and old need to wear a mask. It might sound stupid but wearing a mask is cheaper than paying for a funeral. The too, wearing a mask won’t make your friends and relatives miss you. But if you die from COVID-19 somebody will miss you dearly.

Keep Rev. Dan March on your prayer list. He’s at home taking it easy. He was not at Trinity on 5th Sunday. Mary Reed is doing pretty good. She was at church on Sunday. Mary looked a little different in flat shoes. She is over 50 years old, but she can still strut in high heeled shoes. I pray that God allows her to get back in those beautiful heels.

The weather wasn’t as bad as people in this area thought it would be, but in some places the electricity went off for a while.

Those of you who can, drive out to Chestnut Ridge M.B. Church and wish Rev. L.M. Forrest well on his 9th anniversary as pastor on Second Sunday between 11:15 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. A drive by appreciation will be given in the yard.

Mrs. Bobbie Gregory of Tchula passed recently. Keep the family uplifted with prayer.

the past several weeks.

Baptist Memorial Healthcare is requiring that all of its employees — including those at Baptist Memorial Hospital North Mississippi — be vaccinated against COVID-19 by Nov. 1, the Oxford Eagle reported.

The newspaper reported that more than 100 people, including children, joined the demonstration on a sidewalk Wednesday outside the hospital in Oxford. As cars passed, protesters chanted, “Hear our voice. Mandate Choice.”

The hospital issued a

statement in response to the protest, saying the vaccine mandate in the best interest of employees and the community.

Nurse Informaticist Lacy Cunningham, who has worked at the hospital about 12 years, said she cannot get vaccinated for health reasons. She said she is not against the COVID-19 vaccinations and others in her family have received them, but she believes people should make their own medical decisions.

Cunningham said the mandate is insulting to many Baptist Memorial employ-

ees, and she wants the hospital to repeal it.

“We need a little bit more respect, especially with what these nurses and healthcare workers have been through over the past year,” Cunningham said. “It’s a big slap in the face. You trust me to take care of you and make medical decisions and actions that take care of you, but you don’t trust me to make medical actions and decisions to take care of myself.”

The hospital’s statement acknowledged some employees oppose the vaccination requirement. It said the hospital will have a process for employees who cannot get the vaccine for health reasons or other reasons, similar to the process it fol-

lows for its flu vaccine requirement.

“While they have the right to voice their opinions, we have a responsibility to provide the safest environment for our staff members and patients, many of whom are vulnerable and immunocompromised,” the hospital statement said. “Given we are in the midst of the greatest health care crisis of our generation, we made the decision that we believed to be in the best interest of our entire team, patients and community at large.”

The University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson is also requiring all of its employees to get vaccinated against the virus by Nov. 1.

Mississippi has nearly 3

million residents. The state Health Department said Mississippi has had more than 443,500 cases of COVID-19 and more than 8,500 deaths from it since the pandemic began in the spring of 2020. The state reported 3,850 new cases Thursday.

About 52% of U.S. residents and 39% of Mississippi residents are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, the state Health Department said.

The department also said that between Aug. 5 and Wednesday in Mississippi, 99% of the new COVID-19 cases, 86% of the COVID-19 hospitalizations and 87% of the COVID-19 deaths in the state during those dates were in unvaccinated people.

## PUBLIC NOTICE Holmes County Consolidated School District

**Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6, the Holmes County Consolidated School District is hereby placed under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Education acting through the State Board of Education’s appointed interim superintendent, Dr. Jennifer Wilson. Pursuant to Mississippi Code Annotated § 37-17-6, this public notice is given by the State Board of Education and the Commission on School Accreditation.**

**On August 2, 2021, the Commission on School Accreditation determined there is sufficient cause to believe that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Holmes County Consolidated School District brought on by serious violations of federal and state law and accreditation standards, serious concerns regarding financial resources, inappropriate standards of governance, a continued pattern of poor academic performance, and the failure to comply with standards that sustain a safe school climate, which jeopardizes the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools of this District, and which, without intervention by the Commission on School Accreditation and the Mississippi Board of Education, could result in the continuation of an inadequate and unstable educational environment, thereby denying the students of this District the opportunity to learn, to excel, and to obtain a free and appropriate public education.**

**On August 3, 2021, the State Board of Education reviewed the findings of an on-site investigative audit conducted by the Office of Accreditation, Mississippi Department of Education for the Holmes County Consolidated School District. The State Board of Education found that there is sufficient cause to believe that an extreme emergency situation exists in the Holmes County Consolidated School District brought on by serious violations of state and federal law and accreditation standards, serious concerns regarding financial resources and lack of internal controls, inappropriate standards of governance, inappropriate oversight by the local board, a continued pattern of poor academic performance, and the failure to sustain a safe school climate, which jeopardizes the safety, security, and educational interests of the children enrolled in the schools of this District, and which, without intervention by the Mississippi Board of Education, could result in the continuation of an inadequate and unstable educational environment, thereby denying the students of this District the opportunity to learn, to excel, and to obtain a free and appropriate public education.**

**The State Board of Education further finds that Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (12)(c)(vii) authorizes the State Board of Education to take such action as prescribed in Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13 when a state of emergency is declared under Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-6 (12)(b);**

**In accordance with Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13, the State Board of Education does hereby abolish the Holmes County Consolidated School District pursuant to Miss Code Ann § 37-17-13, effective on the date of the Proclamation of the Governor.**

**Pursuant to Miss. Code Ann. § 37-17-13, the State Board of Education will exercise all powers which were held by the previously existing school board and the previously existing superintendent of schools.**

**Copies of the August 2nd Resolution adopted by the Commission on School Accreditation and the August 3rd Resolution adopted by the State Board of Education that a state of emergency be declared in the Holmes County Consolidated School District accompanied the official request to the Governor by the State Board of Education and are on file in the Mississippi Department of Education. By Proclamation dated the 5th day of August, 2021, Governor Tate Reeves declared that a state of emergency exists in the Holmes County Consolidated School District. Based on this declaration, the State Board of Education approved the appointment of Dr. Jennifer Wilson as the interim superintendent for the Holmes County Consolidated School District. As interim superintendent, Dr. Wilson is responsible for the administration, management and operation of the district and will periodically report to the State Board of Education on the progress or lack of progress being made in the district to correct the district’s impairments during the state of emergency.**