



PRESS RELEASE

**New York State
Unified Court System**

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**Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge**

www.nycourts.gov/press

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Chief Judge Provides Update on New York State Court System's COVID-19 Vaccine Policy

NEW YORK—Chief Judge Janet DiFiore announced that as of today 15,184 of the New York State Court System's 15,600 judges and non-judicial employees—over 97 percent—have submitted proof of vaccination or a request for a medical or religious exemption in response to the Court System's COVID-19 vaccine policy. Judge DiFiore also reported that of the 416 individuals who are not yet in compliance, more than 300 are presently on some form of extended leave, including medical leave, making the actual compliance rate over 99 percent.

"I am proud of the responsible, disciplined, supportive and near-perfect response of our judges and non-judicial employees throughout the State, enabling us to preserve the safest possible environment to support the delivery of justice and the resumption of in-person operations in our court buildings," said Chief Judge DiFiore. "The COVID-19 vaccines are a critically important and necessary measure to protect the health and safety of our court family and the public."

Several court unions have commenced lawsuits seeking to prevent implementation of the Court System's vaccine requirement. Last Friday, the Albany County Supreme Court issued a decision denying the unions' request for a preliminary injunction and permitting the vaccine requirement to be fully implemented. The unions are now appealing the decision and challenging the vaccine policy on behalf of the tiny percentage of the Court System workforce that is not in compliance.

Added the Chief Judge, "We welcome the opportunity to demonstrate that our policy is fully within our legal powers as a responsible, appropriate and necessary response to the extraordinary and unprecedented threat that COVID-19 poses to the public health and safety. Our number one priority is to make certain that everyone who enters our courthouse buildings remains safe and healthy as we go about our important work of delivering justice services during these difficult times."

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