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ABI's Statement on Biden's New Vaccine Requirements

ABI believes employers can best navigate their workplaces and strongly encourages all Iowans to be vaccinated

DES MOINES, Iowa – The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI), Iowa's largest employer association with 1,500 members representing 330,000 employees, remains as committed as ever to fighting to end COVID-19. At the onset of the pandemic, many ABI members changed their production lines to make critical personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer, and even parts for respirators. Scores of masks and face shields were donated to front-line healthcare facilities to ease shortages they were experiencing.

With 83% of Iowa's employers deemed essential businesses, ABI members found ways to keep our doors open and our facilities running while taking the best possible care of our workforces. This allowed members to keep production lines running, keep critical supply-chain products moving and make sure that crops and livestock grown and raised in Iowa were properly processed and made it to the nation's food supply.

Strong leadership of Iowa's policymakers backstopped these efforts by providing liability protections for businesses that remained open to provide these critical goods while following best practices to keep their workforces safe. These same policymakers also recognized that mandates on businesses from policymakers were counterproductive as business owners, those closest to the workplaces, can best navigate the correct COVID-19 response for their individual situations. Though considered, a call to ban an employer's ability to require employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 was rightly rejected for that reason. Many ABI members instituted mask and vaccine mandates on their own. ABI is also speaking to all members of our Iowa congressional delegation to share our stance.

ABI believes President Biden's announcement yesterday that he will direct the Department of Labor to develop an emergency temporary standard requiring employers to mandate that all employees are vaccinated is misguided. The policy proposal fails to recognize what is understood in Iowa, that any mandate in the workplace inhibits an employer's ability to manage the end of COVID-19, keep the economy running and the nation fed.

ABI will continue to strongly urge all Iowans to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

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