



FDA approval of Pfizer's vaccine may drive more mandates

Tina Reed

August 24, 2021

More employers are likely to mandate COVID-19 vaccines for their workers now that the Pfizer shot has gotten full approval from the FDA.

Driving the news: Chevron, the Pentagon and New York City schools imposed vaccine mandates within hours of the FDA's announcement, and experts say more public and private employers will likely follow suit soon.

"**What we've seen** is employers don't want to be the first in their industry but certainly, as other comparable companies begin to mandate the vaccine, they feel comfortable as well mandating it for their workers," Devjani Mishra, a leader of the COVID task force at San Francisco-based law firm Littler, told Axios.

- "This hopefully brings the temperature down a little bit ... where we're no longer talking about something that's experimental," she said.

By the numbers: About 12% of employers were planning to impose either a broad mandate or a requirement for subsets of their workers in the near future, according to a Littler survey of more than 1,600 in-house lawyers, C-suite executives and HR professionals.

- That's in addition to 9% of employers already mandating vaccines for some or all of their employees.

The big picture: Other factors tied to the approval could also drive up vaccine rates. For instance, experts have hypothesized for months that full approval might push the hesitant to finally get the shot.

- "I see this in my own medical practice where I have patients who haven't gotten vaccinated ... a fair number of them say, 'I don't want to take something that's experimental,'" said Jeffrey Singer, a general surgeon and senior fellow at the Cato Institute.
- **Yes, but:** Some experts are afraid higher uptake might come from parents seeking shots for kids who aren't yet eligible. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly discouraged pediatricians from administering the vaccine to kids 11 and under until data was available.

The other side: "I'm all for this approval. I just don't think it's going to be a game-changer in terms of vaccine uptake," said Andrew Noymer, associate professor of public health at the University of California, Irvine. "We've seen so much death and destruction. If that's not enough to get people to vaccinate, why would some bureaucratic distinction be enough?"