

## **Explanation of Vaccination Policy**

Dear Brothers,

I pray this finds each of you well, both in body and soul, rejoicing in the joy of the Holy Spirit, whose temple we are. As mentioned before, the leadership of Metanoia has been monitoring the Covid-19 virus through the Hamilton County Department of Health website, as well as looking at guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies.

Based on the most current information available, effective today, September 1, 2021, Metanoia Ministries is asking that all volunteers be fully vaccinated from Covid-19. The term "fully vaccinated" means that two weeks have passed since you received the second dose of a two-dose vaccine or the single dose vaccine. The Leadership thought it good to give you some explanation as to the change in policy.

First, as you may know, the Delta variant of Covid is spreading much more rapidly and broadly than any previous variant. It is also causing much more damaging illness. Currently, Hamilton County's hospitals have more Covid-19 patients in their hospitals *and* in ICU's than at any other time during the pandemic.

Next, there is evidence that, while vaccinated people can get and transmit the Delta variant, the viral load is weaker in their bodies and thus less transmissible for a shorter length of time. This is especially important with this particular strain. We hear and read reports about unvaccinated folks occupying the ICU beds, but not the vaccinated.

One of the issues that Metanoia has to deal with is mitigating risk. It is our duty to assist the prison, to the best of our ability, in keeping up the safety of the staff and residents. This is why we have always asked our volunteers ~~folks~~ to stay home when they have a headache, cough, scratchy throat, etc. The research does indicate that vaccines do mitigate the risk of transmitting the Covid-19 virus by reducing the viral load in the infected.

We will not be asking you to provide proof of vaccination. As Christians, we assume that everyone will tell the truth as to their status.

We realize that some of you may choose to exempt yourselves from mentoring due to this policy. We stand by you in your choice. It is not our place to bind any person's conscience. We hope that you will continue to carry on the relationship with your mentoring partner via the mail as many of us have over the past 18 months. If/when this policy changes, we will notify you of any changes.

If you cannot or will not continue to mentor in person, please let Tim Busch know. His e-mail address is [metanoiamentoring@pcanet.org](mailto:metanoiamentoring@pcanet.org). His office number is: 423-267-1206, ext. 150. If you would like to discuss this policy or have additional questions, please contact Metanoia's Executive Director, Mark Casson. His e-mail is: [mcasson@pcanet.org](mailto:mcasson@pcanet.org) and his cell is: 559-681-7858. You may also reach Metanoia's Regional Director, Barry Smith, at: [bsmith@pcanet.org](mailto:bsmith@pcanet.org). His number is: 786-518-6736.