

Harris Quoted in *Columbus Business First* Stories About COVID-19 Vaccinations and the Workplace

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Bob Harris, a partner in the labor and employment group, was quoted in two recent *Columbus Business First* stories about whether or not employers can require employees to get a COVID-19 vaccine. One story, titled “requiring employees to get vaccinated raises tricky issues, Columbus attorney says,” focused on what employers’ legal options are for mandating or incentivizing vaccinations.

The story states:

“Robert Harris, a labor law attorney at Vorys Sater Seymour and Pease LLP in Columbus, said vaccination is ‘the question that’s on everyone’s mind these days.’

The answers to mandating or incentivizing vaccinations, Harris said, are ‘both simple and not even remotely simple at the same time.’

Generally speaking, he said, employers are ‘permitted to require vaccines.’ However, they would have to provide ‘accommodations if they’re reasonably available for folks who are disabled and their disability prevents them from getting the vaccine.’ In addition, Harris said, workplaces ‘have to be prepared to discuss accommodations for folks who have religious beliefs’ that prevent them from getting a vaccine.

‘It may also need to consider what additional situation they might have accommodations for, whether it be health situations that may fall short of an actual disability,’ he said. ‘For example, pregnant women – where do you draw the line?’”

To read this story on the *Columbus Business First* website, [click here](#). (Subscription may be required).

A second story, titled “here’s how one Columbus company is incentivizing employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine,” also featured quotes from Harris.

That story states:

“Harris said bonuses such as gift cards for those who choose to get vaccinated are fine. Things get a little trickier when requiring employees to get vaccinated, though that is also legal. Generally speaking though, he said, ‘voluntary compliance is always preferable to forced compliance.’

‘If employers want to incentivize that behavior, these are good ideas and generally not legally dangerous,’ he said. ‘You want to make sure that whatever program (you’re offering) is fair and isn’t impinging on any protected rights.’”

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