

# Hospitals: Infections Among Staff Drive Shortage

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systems. The variant has significantly impacted the number of available staffers in addition to the people Omicron has put into hospitals,

“The staffing issue most hospitals are facing is due to the rapid spread of the virus, including breakthrough cases, that have spread among health care workers,” **Nick Lymberopoulos**, chief executive of **Providence Cedars-Sinai Tarzana Medical Center**, wrote in an email. “We are managing that by hiring contract nurses and traveling nurses as needed.”

The U.S. Supreme Court on Jan. 13 blocked the federal government’s mandate that all companies with at least 100 employees require them to be vaccinated, but let stand the rule for health care workers. Under that mandate, health care workers must be fully vaccinated by March 15 in the 24 states that do not have the measure already in place.

**Daphne Yousem**, a spokesperson at **Los**

**Robles Regional Medical Center** in Thousand Oaks, wrote in an email that 92 percent of employees at the hospital are vaccinated and that vaccination mandates have not made the COVID surge harder to manage. “We have plans and protocols in place and work with our parent company HCA to ensure that we



**Nick Lymberopoulos**

have the personnel here at the hospital to take care of our patients,” she wrote.

California instituted a vaccine mandate for health care workers last fall, as well as a mandate for workers to be boosted by Feb. 1, 2022. The California state mandate is not itself having an impact on hospitals handling the

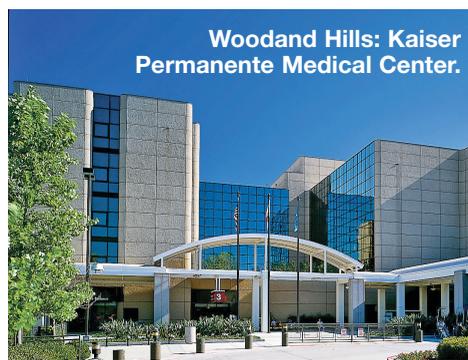
surge, according to hospitals that are dealing with high ICU occupancies.

**Kaiser Permanente** was one of the first major organizations in the United States to announce its own vaccine requirement for its employees and physicians, doing so in August 2021.

“Well under 1 percent of our workforce refused to get vaccinated or obtain a qualified exemption and have left our organization,” **Marc Brown**, a Kaiser Permanente spokesman, wrote. “Should these employees decide to comply with the mandate and become vaccinated in the future, they will become eligible to apply for open positions at Kaiser Permanente.”

In the Valley region, Kaiser has large facilities in Woodland Hills, Panorama City, Santa Clarita and the Antelope Valley.

**Dignity Health**, which oversees Northridge Hospital Medical Center, is another provider



Woodland Hills: Kaiser Permanente Medical Center.

that created an internal vaccine requirement unless workers were granted a medical or religious exemption. “Vaccination continues to be key in keeping our community safe and protected from serious complications from the COVID-19 virus,” a Northridge Hospital spokesperson wrote in an email.

## Up-down statistics

The highest seven-day average of cases seen so far during the surge in Los Angeles County clocked in at 41,682 on Jan. 15, while the highest average in Ventura was 2,616 on the same day, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Both days represent the highest seven-day average either county has seen throughout the entire pandemic, far exceeding the numbers seen in the 2020-2021 winter surge.

Hospitalization rates and ICU capacity were not pressing issues in the early days of the Omicron surge. However, after holiday celebrations, such numbers climbed significantly.

In the week ending Jan. 20, 15 hospitals and medical centers across the San Fernando Valley, Antelope Valley, Simi Valley, Thousand Oaks, Oxnard and Ventura had ICU occupancy

at or above 87 percent. Nearly half of those had ICU occupancies at or above 97 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. **Nancy Gin**, regional medical director for quality for Kaiser Permanente Southern California, shared in a statement that as of Jan. 25, 48 percent of all admitted patients at Kaiser Permanente’s 15 hospitals in Southern California were COVID positive admissions. She added that 58 percent of all ICU patients were COVID positive and that the Southern California Kaiser ICUs were at 93 percent capacity.

Gin wrote that although there is a high ICU usage, the hospitals were using only 25 percent of available ventilators.

COVID-19 deaths are on the rise in Los Angeles and Ventura counties despite the fall in cases, as seven-day averages for both cities reached one of their highest points during the surge on Jan. 24.

Lymberopoulos said that while Providence’s numbers are dropping, its health care teams are concerned that a significant percentage of the population has not been fully vaccinated or received booster shots.

“This means more patients, more serious illness and, tragically, more deaths,” Lymberopoulos wrote. “That leads to another serious concern — the toll this takes on our caregivers who are working tirelessly to care for patients who, in most cases, would not be so severely ill, had they received their shots.”

Although deaths are on the rise and vaccination rates are imperfect, a comparison between the current surge and that of the 2020-2021 winter surge shows a stark difference.

The previous surge saw L.A. County reporting hundreds of deaths nearly every day in January 2021. In contrast, daily death counts have primarily stayed beneath 100 in January 2022.

**KAISER PERMANENTE**  
**HOSPITALS:** 39  
**MEMBERS:** 12.5 million  
**EMPLOYEES:** About 216,801  
**MEDICAL OFFICES AND OUTPATIENT FACILITIES:** 730  
**ANNUAL OPERATING REVENUE (2020):** \$88.7 billion

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# ON THE MOVE PEOPLE & COMPANIES

### MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

#### **GHJ MERGES IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ACCOUNTING FIRM ORLANDO, MITTS, MOORE AND COMPANY**

GHJ, an accounting and advisory firm headquartered in Los Angeles with team members and clients throughout the U.S., is excited to announce its expansion in Northern California with Orlando, Mitts, Moore and Company (OMM), an accounting firm based in San Jose, CA, joining its team. The addition of this second office demonstrates GHJ’s commitment to growth so it can better serve its clients nationally. Dedicated to excellence, GHJ believes merging OMM into GHJ will allow both employees and clients to #BeMore.

“OMM has a strong reputation in the community and brings a wealth of experience, especially in their tax services,” said GHJ Managing Partner Tom Barry. “The synergy between OMM and GHJ’s culture and values made this a perfect complement to our existing client offerings. Bringing OMM into GHJ is another demonstration of our commitment to better serve our clients located throughout California and the U.S.”

GHJ is thrilled for OMM Partners and Owners Laurie Orlando and Lou Mitts and their team to join GHJ. Founded in 1981, OMM provides accounting services

to individuals and businesses, including compilations, reviews and audits. OMM specializes in tax planning and preparation for corporations, LLCs, partnerships, private foundations, nonprofits, estates and trusts.

Merging OMM into GHJ provides synergy with two like-minded organizations. Tightly aligning with GHJ’s own vision and values, OMM’s mission is to help clients achieve success by providing personalized attention and excellent service that addresses not only today’s needs but tomorrow’s plans. Similar to GHJ, OMM has also embraced technological innovations and evolved over the years to meet the needs of its clients, without losing its commitment to personalized service.

“We are excited to be joining GHJ and what this means for both our clients and our employees,” said Laurie.

With this expansion to a new office in Northern California, GHJ will be able to grow both its reach and its ability to serve clients, including current OMM and GHJ clients as well as future ones.

“Giving our clients access to GHJ’s breadth of expertise and resources will give us the chance to expand our service offerings and serve our clients better than ever before,” added Lou.

GHJ’s Tax Practice pre-acquisition was comprised of over 65 professionals with expertise in state and local taxes, international tax planning, high-net-worth services and nonprofits in addition to corporate taxes. With tax providers located throughout the U.S., GHJ serves clients globally so they can grow revenues while minimizing tax burdens.

“Having OMM’s impressive team of professionals join GHJ will help deepen our pool of top-notch talent and resources and aligns with our commitment to excellence in client service,” Partner and GHJ Tax Practice Leader Akash Sehgal added.

700 S Flower Street, Suite 3300  
 Los Angeles, CA 90017  
[www.ghjadvisors.com](http://www.ghjadvisors.com) • [info@ghjadvisors.com](mailto:info@ghjadvisors.com)  
 310.873.1600

