



## National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces

### MISSION

*NCMAF connects  
member faith groups with  
military and VA chaplaincies,  
and celebrates the  
religious diversity of the  
United States of America.*

### VISION

*NCMAF will advocate  
for the First Amendment  
and provide a unified voice on  
religious freedom  
and religious diversity.*

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Dear NCMAF Colleagues,

Recent developments in the U.S. Army policy for mandated COVID-19 vaccinations by September 1, 2021, has sparked a reaction from numerous religious organizations. As our service members must follow orders under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, some expressed their concerns; sharing an ambivalence or personal dilemma whether to obey such a mandatory order for their preventive medical care. The CDC and FDA policy from their websites identifies the current vaccine (Johnson and Johnson, Pfizer, Astra Zeneca, and Moderna) is approved for emergency use, but not yet fully approved.

Service members have reportedly reached out to their unit chaplains inquiring whether it would be possible to obtain an exemption to the policy based on a religious adherence or published guidance from their faith-based organization. At NCMAF, we are aware of the positive impact that we have in support of religious liberty for chaplains, service members, and their families, as well as our meaningful voice to those in the Department of Defense who craft personnel policy.

The COVID-19 vaccination is a health matter for individuals, it is a readiness matter for military planners, and it is an emotionally charged social matter in the media that polarizes leaders and subordinates as well as the military and their families. This is also an emotional/spiritual and religious liberty issue for many.

To that end, the NCMAF executive committee wants you to know we are seeking and getting additional information from many areas on the subject. We are deeply interested in giving you as much support as we can. The diverse makeup of our group makes it difficult to achieve a unified stand on this subject. That said, we are pledged to continue our commitment to religious liberty and the spiritual rights of all who wear the cloth of our Nation. We invite you to share with us your thoughts on this matter. Your responses will better inform us as to what important steps we can take to make our unified concerns known to the Secretary of Defense and other federal agencies.

Thank you for your prompt response to the pending mandatory vaccine implementation within the Department of Defense. Our intention is to support and represent our membership, and continue this important dialogue with you in order to assist and serve our military service members who are facing an immediate crisis over this situation. May God bless, keep, and guide each of you this day and always.

Klion Kitchen  
Chair, Executive Committee