



Airlines for America®

We Connect the World

December 23, 2021

Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30333

Dear Dr. Walensky:

On behalf of Airlines for America (A4A) and our member companies, we request the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reevaluate and update the current isolation guideline that recommends 10 days of isolation for fully vaccinated individuals who experience breakthrough COVID-19 infections. Much has changed since the initial guidance was developed and issued in 2020 and we believe that variables such as vaccine rates, improved treatments and mask mandates should be considered as the pandemic and science continue to evolve.

Since the beginning of this health crisis, U.S. airlines have relied on science to help guide decisions as they continuously reevaluate and update their processes, procedures and protocols. That dedication has led to a majority of the aviation workforce being fully vaccinated. That workforce is essential to enable Americans who need to travel domestically or internationally and to keep cargo supply chains operational. We have all worked diligently to lean into the science. As we address the Omicron variant, it is important to reassess the 10-day isolation for those who are fully vaccinated. As with healthcare, police, fire and public transportation workforces, the Omicron surge may exacerbate personnel shortages and create significant disruptions to our workforce and operations.

To address the potential impact of the current isolation policy effectively, we propose an isolation period of no more than 5 days from symptom onset for those who experience a breakthrough infection. In turn, those individuals would be able to end isolation with an appropriate testing protocol. As an industry, we stand ready to partner with the CDC to make scientifically sound policy decisions and work with you to collect empirical data necessary to appropriately monitor any guideline modifications.

Current medical data suggests that Omicron is 25-50 percent more contagious, but likely less virulent and milder symptoms particularly among individuals who are fully vaccinated. Further, Omicron is also associated with a shorter incubation period and infectious period among the fully vaccinated. We believe that these combined variables justify a hastened reassessment of isolation guidelines and look forward to working with you to implement sound policies that protect the health and safety of our workforce and customers as the pandemic evolves.

We value and appreciate our working partnership with the CDC and look forward to our continued work.

Sincerely,

Nicholas E. Calio