New Vaccine Management Solutions Rolled Out

HR technology vendors have unveiled new vaccine management solutions designed to help HR leaders track the immunization status of their workers, monitor vaccine supplies and assess the shifting COVID-19 risk status across their organizations. Workday, ServiceNow and Salesforce are among vendors that have released tools that combine vaccination information with HR data to help leaders improve workforce planning during the pandemic.

Creating Online 'Command Centers'

Workday's solution allows HR leaders to evaluate vaccine availability and worker vaccination status along with enabling employees to confidentially self-report vaccination information, said Barbry McGann, senior vice president of product management. The technology features vaccine management dashboards and compliance reports to track vaccine supply and distribution and can monitor the health and safety of workers by job profile, vaccine prioritization groupings, location and more, McGann said. Companies using Workday's analytics software can pull in immunization data from third-party systems, like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the World Health Organization that can be combined with

real-time HR data and immunization information for more-informed insights.

"HR leaders can use the solution for scenario planning, to prioritize immunizations, and to reopen and bring eligible and immunized workers back to the workplace," McGann said. Such planning helps model factors like office space demands, personal protective equipment needs and workforce availability.

ServiceNow, which provides cloud-based platforms that automate HR processes, also has released a new solution designed to help organizations streamline their COVID-19 vaccination campaigns. The solution promises to address the challenges of vaccination at large volumes, which includes distribution, administration and monitoring of the vaccine.

The application creates a "command center" of sorts on ServiceNow's existing platform that deploys self-service tools to enable vaccine recipients to gather information, schedule appointments, and receive pre-visit information and appointment notifications from vaccine providers.

The technology also can send appointment reminders to employees, notify organizations when more COVID-19 vaccines are available and communicate when new segments of the population are being prioritized for vaccination.

"Distributing, administering and monitoring vaccinations is the greatest workflow challenge of our time," said Bill McDermott, president and CEO of ServiceNow.

Salesforce, a customer relationship management platform, also has a vaccine management solution designed to help health care organizations and governments more efficiently and safely manage vaccine programs at larger volumes. Called Work.com for Vaccines, the technology features vaccine inventory management tools, appointment scheduling, vaccine outcome monitoring, public health notifications and more.

Data Privacy and Security Issues

Experts say using these technologies to collect, store and analyze employee vaccination data comes with legal risks and requires appropriate care in handling.

"Whatever tool is used, employers should be careful to ensure that in receiving the vaccine data, they are not also receiving other medical information from or about employees," said Adam Sencenbaugh, a partner with law firm Haynes and Boone in Austin, Texas.

Sencenbaugh said in collecting vaccine-related data, employers should ensure that whatever technology or process they use isn't making any

disability-related inquiry covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

"The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has stated that simply asking for proof of receipt of a vaccine is not such an inquiry, but further questions, such as asking why an employee did not or perhaps could not receive a vaccine, might be," he said.

Elisa Lintemuth, an employment attorney with Dykema Gossett in Grand Rapids, Mich., said organizations using vendors to manage and track vaccine information should be mindful of state data privacy laws. "We recommend that employers securely store immunization records in confidential medical files separate from personnel records," she said.

Dan Clarke, president of IntraEdge, a privacy compliance platform in Chandler, Ariz., said it's important that organizations keen on collecting and monitoring employee vaccination data not overlook such data privacy and security issues.

"Vaccine data should be treated as sensitive medical information, and companies need to remember they have to comply with specialized COVID-19 laws in addition to existing data privacy and security regulations," Clarke said. "Tracking and storing vaccination records is more complex than simply asking employees whether they've been vaccinated or not."

By Dave Zielinski