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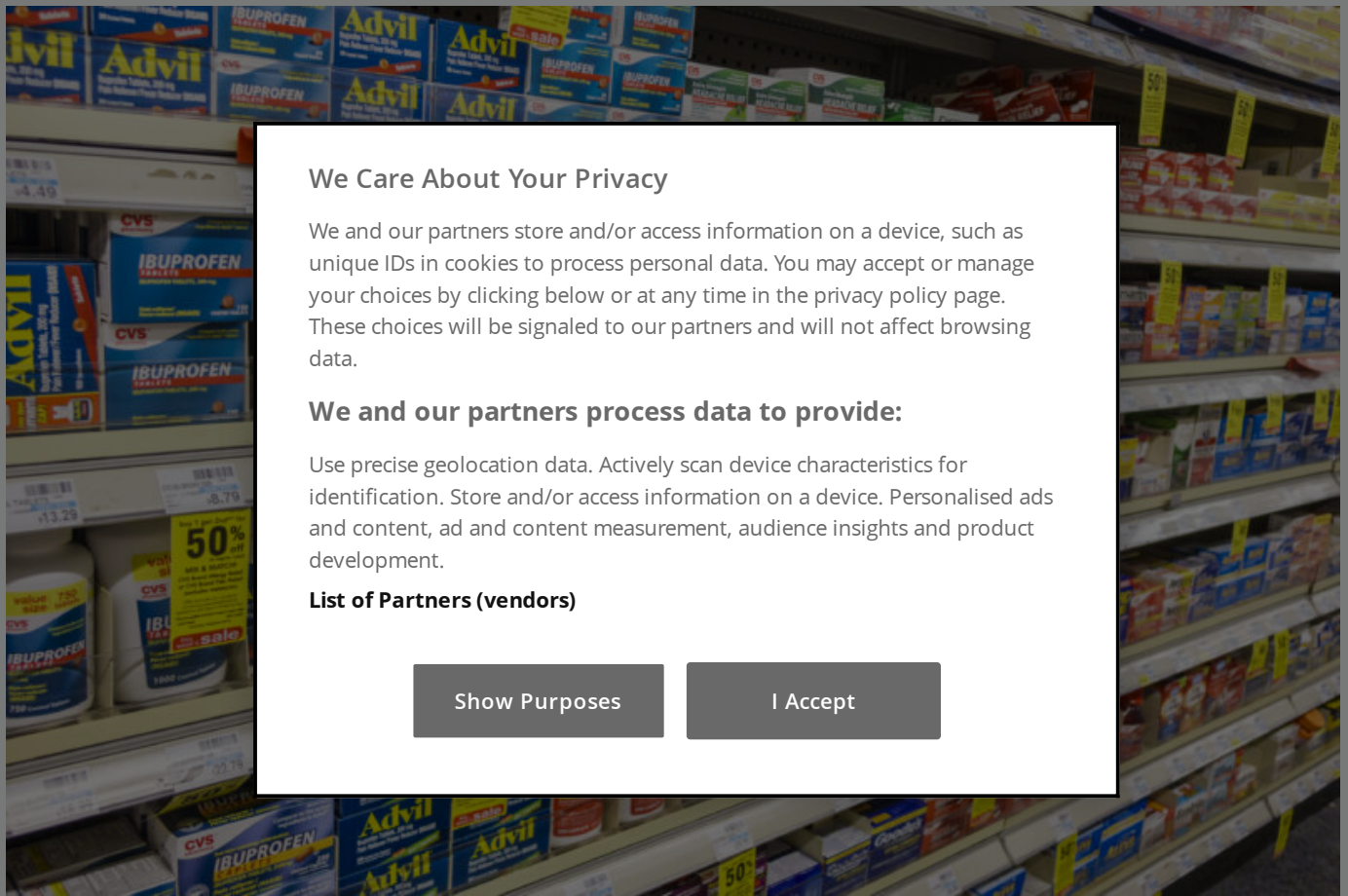
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Hospital CEO aims to educate staff on the full scope of what they're claiming.

BETH MOLE - 9/16/2021, 5:41 PM

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A hospital system in Arkansas is making it a bit more difficult for staff to receive a religious exemption from its COVID-19 vaccine mandate. The hospital is now requiring staff to also swear off extremely common medicines, such as Tylenol, Tums, and even Preparation H, to get the exemption.

The move was prompted when Conway Regional Health System noted an unusual uptick in vaccine exemption requests that cited the use of fetal cell lines in the development and testing of the vaccines.

"This was significantly disproportionate to what we've seen with the influenza vaccine," Matt Troup, president and CEO of Conway Regional Health System, told [Becker's Hospital Review in an interview Wednesday](#).

"Thus," Troup went on, "we provided a religious attestation form for those individuals requesting a religious exemption," he said. The form includes a list of 30 commonly used medicines that "fall into the same category as the COVID-19 vaccine in their use of fetal cell lines," Conway Regional said.

The list includes Tylenol, Pepto Bismol, aspirin, Tums, Lipitor, Senokot, Motrin, ibuprofen, Maalox, Ex-Lax, Benadryl, Sudafed, albuterol, Preparation H, MMR vaccine, Claritin, Zoloft, Prilosec OTC, and azithromycin.

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an exemption without understanding the full scope of how fetal cells are used in testing and development in common medicines."

Troup says that employees who do not sign the attestation form will be granted a provisional exemption, which is only temporary. They may be asked to sign the attestation later and, as the attestation notes, if they fail to get an exemption or a vaccine, they face disciplinary action, including termination.

In an interview with an NBC-affiliated outlet in Arkansas, Troup noted that **only about 5 percent** of the hospital system's staff had filed for a religious or medical exemption and that the rest of the workforce is partially or fully vaccinated.

"A lot of this, I believe, is a hesitancy about the vaccine, and so that's a separate issue than a religious exemption," he said.

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#### BETH MOLE

Beth is Ars Technica's health reporter. She's interested in biomedical research, infectious disease, health policy and law, and has a Ph.D. in microbiology.

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