

COVID-19 VACCINES

December 9, 2020

Since the discovery of COVID-19, pharmaceutical companies have been in a race to develop a vaccine and we have all been hoping and praying it would come soon. By now, you have probably learned that two COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) will soon be approved and ready for distribution. We have long awaited this exciting news and are told that our staff, volunteers, and residents will be among the first to receive these vaccines.

PREPARATION

Our leadership team has been attending workshops and researching vaccination updates while simultaneously collaborating with CVS pharmacy and local hospitals so that we are adequately prepared to receive the vaccine as quickly and efficiently as possible. Our goal is to inform, educate and assist staff and residents throughout the process.

DISTRIBUTION

The Indiana Department of Health will distribute the vaccine in a phased approach.

- **Phase 1A** will include paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings with the objective to reinforce and support healthcare infrastructure and treatment of the disease.
- **Phase 1B** includes individuals who are at risk of morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19 based on evidence-based criteria with the objective to protect the vulnerable.
- **Phase 2** will include individuals who are at elevated risk of transmission because of working or living circumstances to mitigate the spread.
- **Phase 3** will be for the general public with hopes of eradicating the disease.

COSTS

The vaccine is to be free to those receiving it. The vaccine will be paid for by the government and the administration of the vaccine will be paid for by Medicare, private insurance, or government agency.

SAFETY

Safety is the most important requirement for the vaccine and is assessed in trials by independent experts. The FDA requires 50% efficacy of a COVID-19 vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna are showing 94-95% efficacy in preventing COVID-19 disease during this trial phase. FDA advises a minimum of 3,000 participants to assess safety. The current phase 3 trials have 30,000 to 50,000 participants. This really demonstrates how safety is a top priority for the FDA and the medical community.

SIDE EFFECTS

In Moderna's phase 3 vaccine trials, about 10 percent of participants experienced fatigue, roughly 9 percent reported muscle aches and about 5 percent had joint pain and headaches. Pfizer's phase 3 interim analysis documented fatigue in 3.8 percent of participants and headaches in 2 percent. Injection site pain was noted in both trials. These reactions are reported to be "temporary," and they "self-resolve" within a few days. For

seniors and those that work in healthcare settings especially, the benefits of receiving the vaccine greatly outweigh any risks. The COVID-19 vaccine cannot give you COVID-19 because it is not a live virus vaccine. The vaccine works by helping the body create antibodies to fight off the virus. Feeling temporary discomfort after getting the vaccine means that the vaccine is doing its job and your body is making antibodies.

ADMINISTRATION

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses, given a few weeks apart. People should get the second dose wherever they receive the first. Our staff will have the opportunity to receive the vaccine early at a local hospital or when CVS comes on site. Residents may receive their vaccine during the CVS vaccination clinics held at our senior living communities.

Many of our residents have experienced life changing scientific advances in immunizations in last 50-100 years. They understand that medical technology has come a long way since the first vaccine in 1796 when Edward Jenner rubbed fluid from a cowpox blister into a boy's arm resulting in immunity to the highly fatal disease. They have lived through some of the most significant scientific discoveries in the past 100 years and have witnessed the benefits of immunizations to smallpox, polio, the flu, HPV, and shingles. Now, we all can participate in this historical scientific breakthrough and stop or reduce the number of people we see reported everyday who become extremely ill or pass away from COVID-19.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to protect yourself, your loved ones and others who work and live in our communities by getting the vaccine when it is available to you. This has been a difficult time for everyone, but we are grateful for your support and that we live in a nation that supports scientific research. Let us all remain hopeful that the vaccine will expediate a return to life filled with family and friends gathering, shared meals, fun outings, closeness, connectivity, hugs, and smiles. We will keep you informed throughout the process as we move forward. We look forward to doing our part in this effort by getting the COVID-19 vaccine and hope you will join us.

Sincerely,

Justus Leadership