



TO: All Catholic Health Associates and Providers

FROM: Mark A. Sullivan
President & CEO, Catholic Health

Michael S. Gough, MD
President, Catholic Health Medical staff

RE: COVID-19 Vaccines

DATE: December 10, 2020

The Food & Drug Administration is reviewing COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna for Emergency Use Authorization. If approved, New York State expects to receive an allotment of vaccines next week.

While manufacturers will expedite production, it will still be a lengthy process to make the vaccine available to the entire U.S. population. Guidelines established by state and federal agencies, with support from independent medical review panels, have determined frontline healthcare workers and the elderly, specifically those living in nursing homes and congregate living facilities, should be vaccinated first, followed by other high risk individuals.

Catholic Health convened a team of clinicians, logistic and operations specialists, and a number of other representatives from area such as IT, Health & Safety, HR, and Mission to develop a safe, equitable and orderly plan to vaccinate associates and providers throughout our system. While we have some procedures already in place through our annual flu shot program, our COVID-19 vaccination plan will require a scheduled and phased-in approach based on clinical and ethical priorities we have established, and vaccine availability.

Catholic Health's nursing home residents and staff will be vaccinated through a federal Pharmacy Partnership Program in conjunction with Walgreens Pharmacy. Walgreens will be administering the vaccine at Father Baker Manor, McAuley Residence, Mercy Nursing Facility at OLV and St. Catherine Laboure Healthcare Center.

Associates and providers working in Catholic Health's ICUs, Emergency Departments, and COVID units will be the first to receive the vaccine from our system allocation, as supply permits. As more vaccine becomes available, we will proceed with a carefully planned process to vaccinate all other associates and providers based on a prioritization model developed specifically for this purpose.

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We will be using Epic to schedule and track all COVID-19 vaccinations in Catholic Health. In the coming days, you will receive more specific information on vaccination scheduling and distribution methods, Point of Distribution locations, a survey to determine your interest in being vaccinated, and Questions & Answers regarding the vaccine.

We urge anyone who has not registered for the Epic MyChart patient portal to do so today by going to chsbuffalo.org/mychart. All of your test results, vaccinations, and medical visits in Catholic Health, as well as a variety of other patient information will be available in MyChart.

The COVID-19 vaccine is not mandated at this time, however, we encourage you to get vaccinated to protect yourself, your coworkers, our patients and residents, as well as your family and loved ones. Please understand our initial vaccine supply is expected to be very limited. If you initially decline and then change your mind, it could take several weeks, or even months, before additional vaccine is available.

The vaccine has been shown to be safe and highly effective in clinical trials, with minimal, short-term discomfort similar to that of the flu vaccine (slight fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue, chills, and pain at injection site). These side effects are normal and a sign that the vaccine is doing its job – helping your body build immunity to the virus.

Thank you in advance for your support of this critical tool in the fight against COVID-19 and our ongoing efforts to make our system, community, and world a safer place for all.