

Thursday, December 10, 2020

Message from Mitch

Preparing for the COVID-19 Vaccine

As the Mayor and Governor announced this week, New York City expects to receive the first shipments of COVID-19 vaccines later this month and an initial shipment as early as this weekend – pending approval by the FDA which is expected either today or tomorrow.

This is an exciting and important development in the fight against the COVID-19 outbreak. NYC Health + Hospitals will play an important role in administering the COVID-19 vaccine when available and we are committed to keeping you informed during this rapidly evolving situation.

At this time, we are still awaiting guidance from the State and City Departments of Health regarding specific inventory amounts, shipment date to us, and distribution plans. However, our health system has been planning extensively for this moment.

We are building capacity with the appropriate storage, developing plans for administering the vaccines, and drafting standard operating procedures for our system to follow. We will be ready to activate a safe and efficient distribution process when the supplies and final guidance become available.

NYC Health + Hospitals will follow Federal, State and City guidelines about who should receive the first doses, which may include nursing home residents and staff, and other front-line health care workers who are at high risk of being exposed to COVID-19. The State is awaiting FDA approval for one of the vaccine products and has committed that it will only endorse a vaccine that is determined to be safe and effective. Decisions about the priority populations will be based on science, clinical expertise, federal guidelines, and mindful of the health care disparities that exist in our communities.

We hope that vaccines will be available to our patients in early 2021 and we'll be contacting our patients as soon as we have information about who can get it and when. As is the mission of NYC Health + Hospitals, we will ensure there is fair and equitable access to the vaccine and will prioritize New York City's most vulnerable and most at risk for contracting the virus when we can begin wide scale roll-out later next year.

Even as the vaccine becomes available, we must continue to be vigilant to prevent the spread of this virus among our coworkers and the community-at large. Wear a mask indoors and outdoors, follow social distance guidelines, avoid large gatherings and congregating in breakrooms, wash your hands often, get your flu shot, and get tested for COVID-19 frequently.

Stay safe, NYC Health + Hospitals!



Dr. Mitchell Katz
President and CEO

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