

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

Message from Mitch

First in Line for the COVID-19 Vaccine

We are excited in anticipation of receiving the first shipment of the COVID-19 vaccine this week to help keep our health care workers safe.

We expect the first shipments in the next few days. We will be following CDC and State DOH guidelines, and as soon as shipment is received, reviewed, and processed for safety, we will begin to vaccinate a priority group of health care workers who are on the front lines, are at highest risk of exposure to COVID-19, at highest risk of severe illness if they do get the virus, and have the potential to transmit to others at higher risk. Our prioritization is based on stringent guidelines established by New York State.

Hospital Priority Group

With this first shipment, our hospitals will begin to offer vaccine to staff in our Emergency Departments (EDs) and Intensive Care Units (ICUs) who are over age 60 – and regardless of their role. That includes physicians, nurses, respiratory technicians, registration clerks, environmental services workers, food services staff and any other member of the ED or ICU team who meets the age requirement.

Vaccinations to hospital staff will be available by appointment only. The priority staff who work in the EDs and ICUs will receive an email communications from their facility Chief Medical Officer that will include a direct link to an electronic self-scheduling appointment system where they will be able to confirm their eligibility and select the day and time of their vaccine appointment.

We will continue to focus vaccine distribution to the ED and ICU staff for the next several days while we determine the next appropriate group of health care workers who will be eligible for the vaccine based on further regulatory guidelines, supply availability and other factors.

Long Term Care Staff and Residents

Our Post Acute Care facilities, in partnership with the current pharmacy partner, are expected to begin voluntary, on-site staff and resident vaccination

the week of December 20, following strict guidance from the State Department of Health. The initial round of vaccinations will be organized by our pharmacy vendor over three visits to each facility and by appointment.

Vaccination are not mandatory for anyone – but we certainly hope a great majority of our workforce will consider carefully taking advantage of this opportunity to protect themselves and their loved ones. Employees will receive the vaccine at no cost to them, and they will be required to sign a consent form.

COVID-19 vaccines will be an important tool to help stop this pandemic. The vaccine that has been approved for use now will require two doses, three weeks apart. The vaccine will help create an immune response in the body against the virus and may also help keep people from getting severely ill, even if they do get COVID-19.

The vaccine will soon be here and I am thrilled that the amazing and fearless health care heroes of NYC Health + Hospitals will have the opportunity and privilege to be first in line for the vaccines – and once again demonstrate our commitment to save lives.



Dr. Mitchell Katz
President and CEO

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