



December 11, 2020

Message to Duncaster Residents and Families

Michael A. O'Brien, President and CEO

Exciting News! The vaccine is coming-the beginning of the end for COVID-19.

It has been a long and difficult nine months for all of us. While we have adapted our lifestyle to cope with COVID-19 we have all been anxiously awaiting the vaccine and a return to normal. With the encouraging news this week we now know that the vaccine offers the promise of saving lives, our own and everyone around us. And, for the first time in the United States, senior living and long-term care staff have been given priority status.

Yesterday a U.S. government advisory panel concluded that the vaccine from Pfizer and its German partner BioTech appears safe and effective for emergency use in adults and teenagers 16 years and older. The FDA is expected today to sign off on the expert committee's recommendation providing the first measure of protection against a disease that has claimed nearly 300,000 lives in the U.S., including 5,327 in Connecticut.

The State has also released a framework of its plans (subject to change) for the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccines are scheduled to be shipped as early as December 14th (Pfizer) and December 21st (Moderna) in Connecticut and weekly shipments are expected to follow. The state is expecting to receive roughly 180,000 doses of the vaccine by the end of the calendar year.

There are several phases of the vaccine administration plan. As of today, the state is expecting Phase 1a vaccinations to begin in mid-December 2020 and will include healthcare workers, long-term care facility residents and medical first responders. Phase 1b will begin in the first quarter of 2021, possibly as soon as January 2021, and will include critical workforce, other congregate settings, adults over the age of 65 and high-risk individuals under 65. Phase 2 will begin in June 2021 and include those under 18 and remaining people over 18.

This week we were notified by the Department of Public Health that all Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living staff and residents will be one of the first to receive the vaccine-Phase 1a. In addition, the vaccine will be available to all Duncaster staff and needed contracted employees throughout our community. Three vaccine administration clinics will be conducted on site by CVS free of charge. The first will occur on December 27th

and the second on January 17th. We are awaiting notification regarding the date for the third clinic. The time of the vaccine administration will be determined by CVS. The vaccine is administered in two doses, 3-4 weeks apart. While supply of the vaccine will be limited initially, the state plans to work to vaccinate vulnerable populations and critical workforce members quickly. At this time it appears that Independent Living residents will be in Phase 1b.

I recognize that many of you have questions and concerns, including vaccine hesitancy, and would like more information about the vaccine. Educating our staff, residents and families on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine will be critical to a successful vaccination program. Therefore, for all of us to make informed decisions, it is important that we get information from reliable sources including; CDC, DPH, Hartford HealthCare, American Medical Directors Association, Medical Directors and other health care providers.

Beginning next week, the leadership team is planning to have open and honest conversations with staff and residents about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. We will provide everyone with the most up-to-date, transparent, scientifically accurate information about vaccines and vaccine technology information we have including what we know and what we still need to learn. Our goal will be to listen and respond compassionately to questions and concerns regarding the vaccine. I look forward to our conversations.

As we have been saying over the course of this difficult year, we are all in this together. Please know that the safety and well-being of our staff and residents have been, and remain, our top priority. While Duncaster is not making it mandatory to take the vaccine at this time, we are recommending that all staff and residents take it so that we can protect ourselves and others from this virus and get back to a normal life.

We are confident that the worldwide, unprecedented scientific achievement of these COVID-19 vaccines will eventually enable us to enjoy life once again. We look forward to doing our part in this effort by getting the COVID-19 vaccine. We hope you will join us.

Be well and be safe.