



October 3, 2023

Dear residents, patients, families and staff,

Since authorized for use by the CDC last month, we have been poised to quickly vaccinate with the latest COVID vaccine, tailored to help reduce hospitalization and serious illness, thus keeping both those entrusted to our care and our workforce for what may come with the winter season of increased respiratory illness. The Department of Public Health has recently promulgated emergency regulations and we have been awaiting final sub-regulatory guidance which would ensure we develop systems which would meet those regulatory requirements, and also learn about vaccine distribution procedures which our long-term care pharmacy networks would be following.

To date, the additional information has yet to be released, and Partners Pharmacy (our long-term care pharmacy provider) has been given very little information as to turn around time on orders, consistency of availability, or quantity on the market, with a small order placed for each pharmacy to get started and “test” the system. Initial indications are for a week’s turnaround as orders are then distributed to facilities once the pharmacies begin receiving.

As detailed in the *New York Times* article which follows, what should have been a September widespread launch seems already slowed for these uncertainties. It is almost as if the lessons of the last few years have already been forgotten where they need to be remembered most.

Our history in navigating the pandemic has been to achieve extraordinary “up-to-date” vaccination rates for both residents/patients and for staff. We’re committed to getting done what’s necessary to achieve those successes again, though it is now clear that our approach will have to be multi-faceted.

We're going into October with the following priorities:

1. Accessing supply through the long-term care pharmacy system, prioritization will be to vaccinate Liberty Commons residents/patients as soon as it is received. Liberty Commons nurses will administer.
2. Victorian residents will be included in supply orders for vaccine, but if arrangements can be made for vaccination through retail pharmacies (e.g. CVS, Walgreens, etc.), those channels will be utilized first.

Ideally, this should enable our patients and residents to be vaccinated in October.

3. Staff is already being encouraged to book appointments at retail pharmacies, and we continue to do so with this update. (Personally, I made a CVS appointment for September 23<sup>rd</sup>, which was canceled at the last minute because they ran out. However, an appointment at Walgreens last week was successful, so it can be done but takes some perseverance.)

Recognizing that this puts staff in a position of investing time outside of their work day, all who receive both the new COVID and flu vaccines offsite in October and November will be compensated (2 hours total) for their time in special December payroll run. (Staff will be afforded an exemption process which will be developed once program details are released by the state.)

In years past, we have also partnered with CVS who has come on site, bolstering our efforts and successes. We have reached out to CVS now and will hope this is possible again this season.

Consent forms are ready, and we will target finalizing declination exemption processes in the second half of the month, again, prioritizing the actual vaccination over the underlying bureaucracies.

Is it a perfect approach? Probably not, but the best possible given the external and systemic deficits. More updates will follow as additional information is made available.

Meanwhile, some key contacts and resources follow to hopefully help you navigate, and ensure everyone can get answers to questions. Thanks in advance for your support.

Very truly yours,



William J. Bogdanovich, CNHA President &  
CEO