

12/14/2020

To Our Residents and Family Members:

Kissito Healthcare is excited to share that COVID-19 vaccines have received emergency use authorization by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The FDA's authorization for emergency use of the COVID-19 vaccine is a significant milestone in battling this pandemic. These vaccines will be distributed to long term care facilities across the country and made available to its residents and healthcare workers in the upcoming weeks.

We understand there may be questions and concerns surrounding the vaccine, so our goal is to provide additional information that has been shared by a team of medical experts and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vaccinations should be offered to persons regardless of history of prior symptomatic or asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) infection. Individuals who are currently positive with COVID-19 infection will be deferred until recovery from acute illness and criteria is met to discontinue isolation. Although some might be concerned with the speed in which these vaccines were developed, we are confident that it was the result of focused, collaborative work completed by experts internationally. Vaccines approved for use by the FDA have undergone the same level of rigorous testing for safety and efficacy as other vaccines, and in this case have been tested in a sample size greater than thirty thousand people, including older adults, individuals with underlying health conditions and pregnant women. Advisory committees consisting of medical experts from academic institutions also monitor vaccines to ensure their safety. As a result, Kissito Healthcare fully supports and encourages the distribution and administration of the COVID-19 vaccine to its residents and employees.

The COVID-19 vaccine requires administering two separate doses 17-21 days apart, depending on the vaccine. Protection from vaccinating is not immediate whereas it will take 1-2 weeks following the second dose for an individual to be considered fully vaccinated. **The COVID-19 vaccine is NOT a live virus, meaning it cannot give you COVID-19 infection.** The vaccine works by helping the body create antibodies to fight off the virus. As with any vaccine or medication, however, there are possible side effects. These possible side effects include headache, muscle pain, fatigue, chills, and fever. Research shows these side effects are mild to moderate in severity and resolve within 1-2 days of onset. It is important to remember that feeling slight discomfort after getting the vaccine means that the vaccine is doing what it is designed to do and that your body is making antibodies. The CDC and FDA have also created user friendly, technology-based solutions (V-Safe) for safety monitoring after one is vaccinated. Additional communication via phone is forthcoming regarding consents to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to residents.

Kissito Healthcare, along with thousands of other long-term care facilities, are participating in a program with the CDC to help us most efficiently distribute these vaccines to our residents and employees **free of charge**. We continue to partner closely with the CDC and other experts on a weekly basis as we plan for next steps of the COVID-19 vaccine release. Our teams will keep you informed of this process as we move forward.

We encourage you to contact us directly if you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, including to discuss possible side effects, and what to expect after you or your loved one is vaccinated. Ultimately, our top priority continues to be the safety and wellbeing of our residents and staff. We are confident that this scientific achievement will help us all resume normalcy in the months ahead. We look forward to doing our part in this effort by getting the COVID-19 vaccine and encourage all residents and staff to do the same.

Sincerely,

Robert McClintic, Chief Executive Officer, LNHA

Bradley Goad, DO, CMD, FACP, Corporate Medical Director

Kathy Sanders, RN, MHA, LNHA, Chief Nursing Officer