



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
New Jersey Health Care System

COVID-19 Vaccination for High Risk Veteran Patients

December 2020

Veterans and Caregivers,

Effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines will soon be available. COVID-19 vaccination is expected to protect you and those around you, and just as importantly it will hopefully help our communities to move forward and past this pandemic. Once the COVID-19 vaccine is taken by a large percentage of the population, it will be the best tool we'll have to curb the pandemic and return to a more normal life and resume many of the activities that have been curtailed like face-to-face medical appointments, family gatherings, going to restaurants and other entertainment venues, sustained economic recovery and increased employment, and more.

The first vaccines available will be approved by the FDA under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) after having been tested in tens of thousands of individuals. The two vaccines under consideration for EUA have been reported to be over 95% effective in preventing COVID-19 infection and to be safe with no serious side effects.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop a phased plan to maximize the benefit of any authorized COVID-19 vaccine. COVID-19 vaccine is expected to be in short supply at the beginning, but production is likely to ramp up quickly and be available to everyone within the next few months.

We will follow CDC and VA guidance in allocating the initial limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine. Final guidance is not yet available, but we anticipate that in addition to vaccinating critical healthcare personnel, we will also offer the COVID-19 vaccine to our most at-risk Veterans, such as those residing in our Community Living Centers, Spinal Cord Injury Units, other congregate living settings, and those over the age of 85.

While COVID-19 vaccination is not mandatory, we highly encourage Veterans at highest risk take advantage of this important vaccine as soon as it becomes available.

Once the vaccine becomes available, one of our staff will reach out to you/your loved one to discuss specifics of the vaccine, ask about your interest in receiving the vaccine and our plans to administer it.

Even if you receive the vaccine, face coverings, personal protective equipment (PPE), physical distancing and other precautions will still be critically important and required for everyone until new infections drop to low levels.

Be well,

Vincent Immiti, FACHE
Medical Center Director

Promoting a healthier, stronger workforce to care for Veterans