

# Frontline News

1199 MEMBERS ON THE FRONT LINES OF THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

## WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF 1199SEIU'S VACCINE NEWSLETTER

As promised, 1199SEIU is doing all we can to provide education and resources to keep our membership informed and updated about COVID-19, vaccinations, and the guidelines and protocols necessary to keep us safe and healthy.



### A MESSAGE FROM GEORGE GRESHAM

The hardworking women and men of 1199SEIU have been on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic for nine months. During this time, you have bravely fought to save lives, even

though the fear of contracting the disease and endangering the lives of your loved ones. In addition to wearing masks and other PPE, socially distancing, and following other workplace safety procedures, we believe that the COVID-19 vaccine is a critical step forward to help protect our members' health, and to help put an end to this devastating pandemic that has ravaged our nation. Early testing by governmental and independent scientists here in the United States and abroad has shown that the vaccine is safe and effective, and that any side effects are minimal and short-lived. Although concerns surrounding the risk of potential side effects, apprehension about the speed at which this vaccine was developed, and our nation's history of medical discrimination and racism are real, we believe that the development and trials have been thorough to date, and that information on the vaccine's efficacy has been clear and forthcoming. Simply put, after what we have seen over the last nine months, the risks of doing nothing are more dangerous. We strongly encourage you to get the vaccine when available, as we believe it is a vital tool to help us move forward from COVID-19. We do not, however, support any mandate. As healthcare workers, we know that 1199ers are the most trusted voices on this issue, and well-equipped to make the best possible choices to protect yourselves, your families, and your patients. We urge you to stay informed, and together, we will continue to do all we can to help our nation recover and heal.

### COVID-19 FAQs / LINKS / INFO

FAQs compiled and updated regularly by 1199's Benefit Fund and the first place to go for questions about the Covid-19 vaccine, where to get it, and other concerns.

<https://1199onthefrontlines.org/vaccination-faq/>

Other questions about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Email [VaccineQuestions@1199.org](mailto:VaccineQuestions@1199.org)

### VACCINES ARE EFFECTIVE AGAINST NEW STRAINS OF CORONAVIRUS

Like all viruses, the coronavirus mutated and developed new strains as it spread around the world. Generally speaking, most of these mutations do not make the virus more or less dangerous, but recently a new strain has emerged from the United Kingdom that is cause for some concern. Preliminary analysis suggests it may be as much as 70% more infectious and could be contributing to a recent spike in COVID-19 cases in England. In the United States, cases of the new strain have emerged in Colorado, California and Upstate New York. We are likely to see more in the coming weeks.

Fortunately, both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines appear to be effective against this new strain of the coronavirus. Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, has advised the country to not to overreact to the new strain. Dr. Fauci and the federal government's Coronavirus Task Force emphasize the need to keep working the plan to protect ourselves, our families, and our patients – wear masks, practice social distancing, and get vaccinated.

### VACCINATIONS ARE UNDER WAY IN HOSPITALS, CLINICS, AND NURSING HOMES

The effort to defeat the coronavirus has begun. Hospital workers, nursing home staff, and nursing home residents were among the first to receive the vaccine.

- Over 274,000 hospital workers, health clinic employees, nursing home workers, and nursing home residents have received their first vaccination shot in New York.
- In Massachusetts, over 110,000 healthcare workers with direct exposure to the virus received their first shot.
- Florida has administered over 264,000 vaccinations to residents and staff at nursing homes and other front-line healthcare workers at risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Over 65,000 Maryland healthcare workers, first responders, and seniors in congregate settings received their first vaccinations.
- And in the District of Columbia, so far over 15,000 hospital staff, front line healthcare personnel, emergency services providers, and long-term and home healthcare workers received their first dose of vaccine.

States are ramping up their operations to cover all healthcare and other essential workers. The plans to cover home care, mental health, pharmacy, and other essential workers are being worked out so be sure to check in with your employer for updates. *We have a long way to go, but we are on our way.*



“I am glad we have the opportunity to take the vaccine now, I will be first in line to protect myself and others.”

Kathy Griham, Restorative Aide, Edgar Benjamin Healthcare Center, Boston, MA