Purpose: Internal use only. Penn Medicine providers and staff should use this document to respond to patient questions related to the COVID-19 vaccine.

Overview of Patient Vaccination – Updated April 14, 2021

- As directed by President Biden, COVID-19 vaccine eligibility will be expanded to all adults by Monday, April 19. The expansion of eligibility does not mean there will be enough supply for everyone to get a vaccine right away.
  - Philadelphia: Currently, Philadelphia is vaccinating patients who are eligible under Phase 1C, with the goal of all expanding eligibility to all Philadelphia residents older than 16 by April 19. Patients can check phila.gov for more information about vaccine eligibility.
  - Southeastern Philadelphia Suburbs: As of April 13, all Pennsylvania adults, ages 16 and older, are eligible to schedule an appointment for the COVID vaccine. Patients can visit health.pa.gov for more information.
  - New Jersey: On April 5, New Jersey expanded COVID vaccine eligibility to include all residents 55 and older. On April 19, all New Jersey residents 16 or older will become eligible to receive a COVID vaccine. Patients can visit covid19.nj.gov for more information.

- Throughout this effort, we have worked hard to make sure the limited supply of vaccine we had could get to the people who need it most. That work includes:
  - Running community-based vaccine clinics to reach minority and underserved populations
  - Delivering the vaccine directly to people who are homebound
  - Reaching out to eligible patients via outbound phone calls, texts, and digital communications

- We are unable to accept phone calls to schedule COVID-19 vaccine appointments. Once eligible, patients are encouraged to sign up on their state, county, and city websites to find a vaccination location. Patients can also complete the Penn Medicine vaccine interest form (vax.pennmedicine.org).

- Patients with questions about the COVID-19 vaccine can find answers on the COVID-19 vaccine page. The COVID-19 vaccine page can be accessed at: pennmedicine.org/coronavirus/vaccine.

Patients can also call the patient COVID vaccine lines for information:
  - Penn Medicine Chester County Hospital Phone Line: 610-883-5410
  - Penn Medicine Lancaster General Health Phone Line: 717-588-1165
  - Penn Medicine Princeton Health Phone Line: 609-853-6330
  - Patients interested in information about the downtown Philadelphia Penn Medicine hospitals should continue to visit the COVID-19 vaccine page: pennmedicine.org/coronavirus/vaccine.
Johnson & Johnson Vaccine Update

- On April 13, the FDA and CDC called for an immediate pause in the use of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine after six cases of a rare but serious blood clot were reported in some individuals.

- Penn Medicine has received no reports of serious side effects and will continue to closely monitor the review process and collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure the safety of our vaccination efforts to protect as many individuals as possible from COVID-19.

- The protection offered by the J&J vaccine is not in question. In clinical trials, the J&J vaccine was 100% effective at preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19. The pause in the use of this particular vaccine is in no way related to its effectiveness.

- People who have received the J&J vaccine and develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider or be evaluated at the nearest hospital emergency department, and advise the health care provider that they received the J&J vaccine.

Contacting Eligible Patients

- As vaccine eligibility increases and vaccine supply becomes available, Penn Medicine will contact patients via outbound phone calls, texts, and digital communications.

- We have a limited supply of the vaccine, which is not enough to vaccinate all of our eligible patients right now. We expect that it may take several weeks to receive enough vaccine supply to provide first and second doses to all patients.

- Patients will receive information about where they can get their vaccines when they are contacted to make their appointment. The appointment location is determined by where the patient lives.

- Patients who have not yet been contacted can fill out a Vaccine Interest Form (vax.pennmedicine.org) for more information about the availability of the vaccine at Penn Medicine.

Responding to Patient Questions

**Question:** I am eligible for the vaccine. Why can’t I schedule my vaccine yet?

**Response:** Penn Medicine treats a very large number of patients who are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. Currently, we have a limited supply of the vaccine, which is not enough to vaccinate all of our eligible patients right now. As our supply increases, we will continue to reach out to more of our eligible patients, using a process that is fair and equitable. We expect that it may take several weeks to receive enough vaccine supply to provide first and second doses to patients who are eligible. We are not able to schedule vaccine appointments for patients who call or email us with a request to be vaccinated at this time or who walk-in to one of our vaccination sites.

**Question:** Why is this process taking so long?

**Response:** Our goal is to vaccinate Penn Medicine patients as quickly as possible. Our ability to do so depends on how much vaccine we receive from the city and states. The COVID-19 vaccine page (pennmedicine.org/coronavirus/vaccine) on the Penn Medicine website is updated frequently and has the most up-to-date guidance for patients.
COVID-19 Patient Vaccination FAQs and Talking Points

**Question:** I am interested in getting the vaccine. What can I do?
**Response:** Our ability to vaccinate patients is dependent on how much vaccine we receive from the City or State. If you would like us to keep you informed about the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine at Penn Medicine, you can complete our Vaccine Interest Form (vax.pennmedicine.org). Patients can also review the guidance from the City of Philadelphia (phila.gov), the PA Department of Health (health.pa.gov) or the NJ Department of Health (nj.gov), depending on where they live.

**Question:** I am scheduled to get my vaccine at Penn Medicine. My spouse/caregiver/member of household also needs to be vaccinated. Can they be vaccinated along with me?
**Response:** We will not be able to offer the vaccine to your spouse, caregiver or other members of your household, unless they have received their own phone call, text, or email to schedule.

**Question:** Where can I get my vaccine?
**Response:** Penn Medicine will provide details about where you will get your vaccine when you are contacted to make your appointment. The location of the vaccination site is determined by where the patient lives.

**Question:** Do the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines contain blood products?
**Response:** The manufacturers of the currently approved mRNA vaccines, Pfizer-BioNtech and Moderna, have both indicated that no blood or blood products are used in the manufacturing of their vaccines, and the vaccines do not contain any products of human origin. The Pfizer product does contain materials from bovine milk, but no animal blood or blood products.

**Question:** Is Penn Medicine still providing the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?
**Response:** No. Penn Medicine is following the recommendations of the CDC and FDA to pause use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine as data is reviewed and assessed regarding reported cases. The FDA and CDC called for the pause after six cases of a rare but serious blood clot were reported in individuals 6 to 13 days after they received the vaccine.

**Question:** I received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Should I be concerned?
**Response:** No, serious side effects from the vaccine are rare. Penn Medicine has received no reports of serious side effects and will continue to closely monitor the review process and collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure the safety of our vaccination efforts to protect as many individuals as possible from COVID-19.

**Question:** Does the J&J vaccine protect me from COVID-19?
**Response:** The protection offered by the J&J vaccine is not in question. In clinical trials, the J&J vaccine was 100% effective at preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19. The pause in the use of this particular vaccine is in no way related to its effectiveness.

**Question:** Should I tell my doctor I received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?
**Response:** People who have received the J&J vaccine and develop severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider or be evaluated at the nearest hospital emergency department, and advise the health care provider that they received the J&J vaccine.
**Question:** Does the Johnson & Johnson vaccine contain the COVID-19 virus?

**Response:** The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a vector vaccine. Vector vaccines use genetic material from the COVID-19 virus that is placed inside a weakened version of another virus, such as the virus that causes the common cold.

The weakened virus is then injected into your body, delivering information from the COVID virus. That information instructs your cells to copy the spike protein that is unique to COVID-19 and create antibodies against the virus.

It is impossible for a viral vector COVID vaccine to cause you to become infected with COVID-19 or to change your DNA.

**Question:** Should patients with HIV infection receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

**Response:** Patients with HIV infection were included in the initial vaccine trials assessing the safety and effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines. The vaccines are safe for use in people living with HIV (PLWH). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that PLWH should be vaccinated, should they wish to do so, and because of the immunocompromised associated with HIV, PLWH are in the CDC’s higher priority group. While the vaccine is safe and recommended for PLWH, the overall effectiveness in providing protective immunity has not been well studied. Any person with an immunocompromising condition who is vaccinated with any vaccination may have a less robust response and the vaccine may not provide the level of protection seen in people with normal immune systems. The CDC has a dedicated page related to HIV and COVID: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/hiv.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/hiv.html)

**Question:** I am scheduled to get my COVID-19 vaccine at Penn Medicine. Can I choose which vaccine to get?

**Response:** At this time, our supply of COVID-19 vaccine doses is limited, so we will offer you whichever vaccine we have available at the time of your appointment. It is not possible to choose one vaccine over another. The Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines are both mRNA vaccines that are delivered in two doses. If you receive an mRNA vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech) that is delivered in two doses, your second dose will need to be from the same manufacturer as your first dose.

**Question:** Where can I get more information?

**Response:** Patients are encouraged to visit the COVID-19 vaccine page (pennmedicine.org/coronavirus/vaccine) for up-to-date information and FAQs. Patients should also review the guidance from the City of Philadelphia (phila.gov), the PA Department of Health (health.pa.gov) or the NJ Department of Health (nj.gov), depending on where they live.