

# VACCINE NEWS



December 23, 2020 (revised)

Dear Employee,

Thank you to those who completed the COVID-19 Vaccine Survey. Of those senior living employees who completed the survey, **73% expressed interest in receiving the vaccine and 15% were unsure and had some questions—for a total of 88%**. We are pleased with this interest, as the vaccine is an important step in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

Mather, along with thousands of other long-term care providers, is participating in a program with the Centers for Disease Control to help efficiently distribute these vaccines to residents and employees. Long-term care providers are in the first group to have access to the vaccine due to the challenges that long-term care providers have faced during the pandemic.

**There is no cost for the vaccine.** A copy of your insurance card will be requested to cover administration fees, but you will not be required to pay a co-pay. If you don't have insurance, you will still receive the vaccine at no cost to you.

We'd like to address questions you may ask or comments you may have heard about the vaccine. **If you have questions about how the COVID-19 vaccine may affect you personally, please seek guidance from your health care provider. You may also reach out to your manager, Executive Director, or Human Resources representative for any general questions you may have about the Mather COVID-19 vaccination process.**

## **Q: When will we receive the vaccine?**

A: We have confirmed dates for vaccinations in our care venues from our COVID-19 vaccine administrators:

- **Wednesday January 6 - Employees and residents in The Mather Life Centre can receive the vaccine.**
- **Monday, January 11 - Employees and residents in Sonora can receive the vaccine.**

We do not have vaccination dates for Independent Living employees or residents, including those in Mather Place. We will share information as it becomes available.

## **Q: Will the vaccines be provided on-site to employees?**

A: The plan is to vaccinate on-site all employees in The Mather Life Centre and Sonora who want to be vaccinated. Dates and processes for vaccinating employees and residents in Independent Living on-site are still unknown.

## **Q: Which vaccine will we receive?**

A: We do not know yet which vaccine will be administered at any of our communities. We are working with Walgreens for our Illinois communities and CVS for Splendido.

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## **Q: Which pharmaceutical is the best choice of those that have been approved?**

A: Currently, two vaccines have been authorized for emergency use by the US Food and Drug Administration and both are considered very effective. Due to limited availability, it is recommended that you should get whichever one is provided by Walgreens or CVS.

## **Q: If I get the vaccine, will I get COVID-19? Or, will I be contagious?**

A: The COVID-19 vaccine **cannot give you COVID-19, as there is no live or weakened virus in the vaccine at all.** You could still pass the virus on to others, which is why we will all still need to maintain social distancing, wear masks, and wash our hands regularly after vaccination. It will take some time to determine if the virus actually halts transmission or it just protects the person who received it.

## **Q: Will Mather make the vaccine mandatory for employees at some point?**

A: Mather has no plans to make the vaccine mandatory for employees at this time. We are strongly encouraging employees and residents to receive the vaccine as it plays an important part in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

## **Q: What if I am unsure and want to wait? Can I get it whenever I decide?**

A: In order to be vaccinated through Mather, you must decide ahead of time and sign the consent form. **The pharmacy will only bring enough vaccines for the number of consent forms we have in hand.** You may have to seek vaccination from another source at a later date if you choose not to be vaccinated at this time.

- **Wednesday January 6 - Employees and residents in The Mather Life Centre can receive the vaccine. Consents are due by Wednesday, December 30.**
- **Monday, January 11 - Employees and residents in Sonora can receive the vaccine. We'll share the deadline for completed consent forms when we learn it.**

## **Q: Should I be vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?**

A: Yes, even if you were previously diagnosed with COVID-19, or have positive antibodies, it is important to get vaccinated. It could give you longer or better protection against the disease.

## **Q: What are the side effects?**

A: Some participants of clinical trials have reported experiencing short-term side effects after being vaccinated, with more pronounced discomfort after the second dose. These possible side effects include headache, muscle pains, fatigue, chills, fever, and pain at the injection site. Based on the data to date, per the CDC, there are minor side effects in the majority of those that receive the vaccine. Only 4 to 16% of those vaccinated in the vaccines' clinical trials experienced fever as a side effect.

Feeling discomfort after getting the vaccine means that the vaccine is doing its job and your body is making antibodies. Experts from the CDC also believe that getting a COVID-19

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vaccine may also help keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get COVID-19 after being vaccinated.

Note that if you have concerns about having an allergic reaction to a vaccine, you should consult with your health care provider.

**Q: If one of the symptoms is a fever after being vaccinated, if we run a fever from it, should we stay home, or will we be sent home from work?**

A: Staff who develop only symptoms that may be vaccine-related (fever, chills, fatigue, etc.) within three days of vaccination and have not had unprotected exposure in the past 14 days to someone who was COVID-positive may continue to work, provided they are not showing any symptoms that are not likely to be vaccine-related (cough, shortness of breath, runny nose, etc.).

If symptoms do not improve or fever does not resolve within two days, we will ask you to stay home from work and get a COVID-19 test.

- Staff or residents who show any symptoms that are not likely to be vaccine-related, regardless of whether this is accompanied by symptoms that may be vaccine-related, should be managed like staff and residents showing COVID symptoms.

Mather's emergency pay program will remain in effect through February, and will support employees who may experience COVID-19 symptoms.

**Q: If I have a reaction that necessitates time at home, is that accounted for?**

A: You may use Paid Time Off Sick (PTOS) if you need time away due to side effects of the vaccine.

**Q: Do I really need to get both doses?**

A: Yes. Those who are vaccinated will need to get a second dose three or four weeks after the first one. The vaccine will not protect you without the second dose. It is important to get the same vaccine for your second dose. After you receive your first vaccine, Mather will coordinate with a partnering pharmacy (Walgreens in Illinois and CVS in Arizona) to contact you regarding your second dose.

**Q: How long is the vaccine effective?**

A: It is not yet known how long the vaccine will be effective against COVID-19. We will learn more as research continues. People may need to have vaccine shots for COVID-19 on a regular basis (like the flu shot).

**Q: What if I am 17 years of age or younger? Can I still be vaccinated?**

A: Employees under the age of 18 will need to get consent from a parent.

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**Q: What if I am pregnant or planning to become pregnant?**

A: Mather strongly recommends you talk to your health care provider as soon as possible to get advice on whether to receive the vaccine.

**We have long awaited a vaccine, and strongly encourage all employees and residents to be vaccinated as part of the first group. We each look forward to also receiving the vaccine.**

Please take care and stay well.

Sincerely,

Mary Leary  
President and CEO

Michelle Mada, DNP, RN, CWOCN, GCNS-BC  
AVP of Health and Wellness Services

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