

The logo for Arbor Acres features the words "ARBOR" and "ACRES" stacked vertically in a blue, serif font. The text is enclosed within a stylized orange frame consisting of two L-shaped brackets, one at the top-left and one at the bottom-right.

ARBOR ACRES

To: Arbor Acres Residents and Families
From: Andrew W. Applegate, President and CEO
RE: Vaccination/COVID-19 Infection Update
Date: January 25, 2021

On January 22nd Arbor Acres held its first highly anticipated vaccination clinic for residents who live in apartments and houses. I'm happy to report that to date, nearly 97% of all residents, regardless of where they live, have received the first dose! Very few refused the vaccine and there are a few residents who must wait to receive their first dose because they may have been exposed to COVID-19. I want to thank Kathy Gwyn, RN and our Chief Health and Wellness Officer, and her staff throughout the community for coordinating the numerous vaccination clinics for residents.

In spite of the success of the first round of vaccinations, we recognize that we are still vulnerable, as it will take the second vaccination along plus a couple weeks until residents have achieved a level of protection from COVID-19. This is evident in the last round of testing we recently completed on staff and residents.

We are seeing an uptick in the number of staff throughout the organization with positive test results, along with twelve Asbury Place assisted living residents testing positive for COVID-19. While we have been using surgical masks, KN95 masks, and face shields in our licensed areas for some time, beginning this week ALL staff will be issued surgical facemasks, which they will be required to wear by themselves or with a cloth mask.

We have been receiving vaccine administration guidance from the Department of Public Health, particularly as it relates to residents and staff who have a known case of COVID-19. Their advice is that vaccination should be deferred until the person has recovered from the acute illness (if the person has symptoms) and that they have met the criteria for discontinuing isolation. This recommendation from the health department applies to persons who develop the COVID-19 infection before receiving any vaccine does as well as those who develop COVID-19 infections after the first dose, but before the receipt of the second dose.

Many of you have raised questions regarding the vaccination rates for Arbor Acres staff who have served this community day in and day out during this pandemic. As I recently shared with the residents, the vaccination rate for staff is much lower than what we want. After the first round, we have reached only a 30% vaccination rate. This rather low rate is not only of concern to the me and the leadership team of Arbor Acres, but I know it is to you, as well. There are numerous factors contributing to this. Mistrust of the medical systems, particularly on the part of

some of our staff who are members of minority groups is a very real factor in some staff's hesitancy. That mistrust may not always seem logical to some, but the history of the use of minority communities as "test subjects" without their knowledge or consent is a very real concern for many. Also, social media is not helping us. I don't think I need to elaborate on that topic as scrolling through your own social media feeds are proof enough that there is much misinformation out there. I would also add that we have had some staff say that they are hesitant to take the vaccine because they have family members who still insist that COVID-19 is a hoax, and taking the vaccine will impact family relationships. I know for many of you, these statements may come across as excuses. They appear illogical. They, however, are very real for the staff making vaccination decisions.

It would seem that an easy solution would be to require all staff to take the vaccine. Unfortunately, state law, at this time, precludes that option. COVID-19 vaccinations are available under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and that, along with state law, ties our hands. We have discussed this with legal counsel and they concur that forcing vaccination is not an option.

We have been working, sometimes on a one to one basis, with staff members to answer their questions and provide information to help overcome their concerns. Kathy Gwyn and I have recently sent a short video message to staff sharing information, as well as encouraging them to take the vaccine. We have also implemented a program that includes a financial "thank you" for taking both rounds of the vaccine. We will continue to do all we can to encourage participation in the vaccinations for which so many others in our community are standing in line.