



American College of Health Care Administrators

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

A Message from ACHCA Leadership

Statement In Support of COVID-19 Vaccinations for Long-Term and Post-Acute Care Workers

Washington, DC – August 3, 2021 – The scourge of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all areas of life for Americans and has especially affected the long-term and post-acute care industry in so many negative and profound ways. The past year has presented numerous challenges for administrators and executive directors to ensure the safety of both residents/patients and staff members alike.

And now we have a new challenge ahead of us: ensuring residents and patients, their family members, visitors, and – perhaps most importantly – staff members receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccines offer an opportunity to escape the dire effects of the pandemic and they have been demonstrated to be safe and effective. The surge in vaccinations have dramatically reduced the number of COVID-19 cases and the severity of the illness for those who may be exposed to the virus. The currently-available vaccines have been rigorously evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration and the millions of doses administered to date have proven effective at preventing COVID-19 or substantially reducing its effects on vaccinated individuals.

Despite that, there are still many individuals in long-term care communities, nursing homes, assisted living centers, and senior housing settings who have not chosen to receive the vaccine. In many locations, staff vaccination rates have lagged far behind that of our residents, patients, and their family members, despite the numerous efforts to provide education on the safety, side effects, and efficacy of being vaccinated.

Today, many organizations have considered mandating vaccines for all workers in health care settings, both for acute care and long-term care locations. Other recommendations coming from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are strongly recommending the usage of masks, even for vaccinated persons, due to the rise of the Delta variant and its increased transmission ability. Unvaccinated individuals are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 and having severe health complications with the Delta variant and have the potential to more readily spread the virus to other vulnerable individuals.

Each day we go to work to serve our residents and patients, and we should remember that we are, for many individuals, the only family some of these residents have. There are many residents with multiple comorbidities, who may be near the end of life and whose health is frail. They are at the highest risk, even when vaccinated, for complications arising from COVID-19. Charged with caring for and protecting them, we should and must consider achieving the highest rates of vaccination we can among our valued and dedicated staff. If we don't get ahead of the Delta variant, we may find that a return to the isolation of just a few months ago is right around the corner.

The Board of Directors and ACHCA leadership recognize the significant workforce challenges faced in the care communities and facilities our members operate every single day. We know that administrators and executive directors face numerous staffing challenges with frontline workers, who care hands on for our beloved elders every day, especially ensuring there is enough staff to provide the highest quality of care to residents. Finding enough caring persons to do that frontline job every day is an immense challenge, and a solution to the vaccine issue related to COVID-19 must bear in mind the effects on staff members. The Board urges the Biden Administration at the federal level, as well as each state and territory, to swiftly enact solutions that address the COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and these workforce challenges.

The ACHCA Board, in consultation with the Advocacy and Policy Committee, urges all practical and effective efforts to increase the number of staff members and residents who are vaccinated against COVID-19. We join with the American Health Care Association (AHCA/NCAL), LeadingAge, The American Medical Directors Association (AMDA), the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Nurses Association (ANA), the American Pharmacists Association (APhA), and numerous other organizations to strongly urge the vaccination of all eligible staff and residents against the COVID-19 virus.

The only way we can get beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects is to get vaccinated. Thank you for everything you do every day to serve our residents and patients in long-term and post-acute care settings across the country.

About ACHCA

Founded in 1962, the American College of Health Care Administrators (ACHCA) is the only professional association devoted solely to meeting the professional needs of today's post-acute and aging services leaders. Focused on advancing leadership excellence, ACHCA provides professional education and recertification to administrators from across the spectrum of long-term care. For more information about ACHCA, contact the national office at (800) 561-3148 or visit www.achca.org.