



Strategies to Increase COVID-19 Vaccination Rate and Address Hesitancy

Mass Senior Care Association continues to work with our member long term care facilities to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates among residents and staff. Achieving a high rate of resident and staff vaccinations is critical to our fight against COVID-19 and ensuring the safety of our residents and the entire caregiving team. In addition, vaccination rates will be key drivers in rebuilding census and increasing consumer confidence in long term care services. Also, CMS recently released an [Interim Final Rule on COVID-19 Vaccine Requirements](#), which would make a facility's staff and resident vaccination rates public to consumers.

To assist members in their continued efforts to increase vaccination rates, Mass Senior Care developed the [Arming Ourselves Against COVID-19](#) campaign, which is continuously refreshed with new educational materials about the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines. Mass Senior Care recognizes that the reasons for vaccine hesitancy are real and varied, and we are committed to doing all we can to provide accurate, timely information so people can make informed decisions. Below are several strategies that have proven successful in increasing vaccination rates and addressing hesitancy in long term care facilities. Combining several strategies may be more effective than implementing any on their own.

1) Be Proactive: Schedule a vaccine clinic with your long-term care pharmacy for staff who still need vaccines.

Schedule and assign a date and time for unvaccinated staff to receive the COVID-19 vaccine at your facility. This allows staff to have access to the vaccine, without having to find and navigate outside appointments. Staff can choose to opt-out of the vaccine clinic. Set a facility goal and communicate your goal and commitment with staff often. In advance of the clinic, activate a robust education campaign on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. Designate both a peer and clinical leader to help support hesitant staff.

2) Offer Incentives: Encourage staff to be vaccinated by providing a financial incentive such as a cash award, gift card, raffle prizes, an extra vacation day.

[McKnight's LTC News](#) highlights two nursing facilities detailing their successes with an employee mandate and a \$1,000 bonus, which led to over 90% uptake rate. A recent [New York Times article](#) shares a study which tests the effectiveness of different messages on vaccine uptake – cash rewards and reassuring the vaccine's safety and effectiveness work best.

3) Peer-to-Peer Influence: Develop peer level Ambassadors.

Engaging a frontline staff person, or another influential staff person in the organization to encourage others to be vaccinated has been shown to be successful in long term care facilities with higher uptake rates. While hearing from health care professionals is important, peer-to-peer influence is also a powerful tool. Ask peer leaders to promote and support widespread vaccination uptake among staff.

4) Communicate Often: Frequent, targeted and personal communication about the vaccine have an impact.

Repeated, frequent communication on the vaccine is shown to have higher impact than limited or isolated communication. Residents and staff want to hear about vaccine safety and benefits from a trusted medical professional, such as your Medical Director, or a trusted member of the community, such as a local religious

leader. Examples of communication opportunities may include one-on-one conversations between leadership and staff, electronic communications, town halls hosted by your Medical Director or another licensed healthcare professional.

Additional Resources

- Mass Senior Care Association's [Arming Ourselves Against COVID-19](#) Campaign
- AHCA's [#GetVaccinated](#) Communications Toolkit
- Massachusetts Department of Public Health's [Trust the Fax, Get the Vax](#) Campaign