

COVID-19 Health System Guiding Principles/Best Practices **Updated July 28, 2021**

Health systems continue to be on the front lines of the vaccine effort, actively engaging with communities and patients and playing a crucial role in the vaccine effort. As physicians, nurses, and health care leaders, we urge everyone to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they are able and eligible to receive it. These six best practices and guiding principles represent a commitment we have to continuing our work to enhance vaccination rates in the communities we serve.

- 1. Leveraging Patient Touch Points and System Expertise:** Every member of the health care team (e.g. surgeons, OR nurses, security, maintenance, medical assistants, etc) has the potential to be an ambassador for the vaccine and every patient interaction is an opportunity to engage with patients, their family, and their caregivers (as applicable) on the vaccine. To support those conversations:
 - Have a toolkit or guide for conversations available for patient-facing staff/providers to engage effectively with patients and their family members and caregivers (e.g. talking points, take home flyers, Q&A, conversation buttons).
 - Strongly consider message training for patient-facing staff.
 - Leverage pre-registration touch points (e.g. emergency department, inpatient, outpatient and across the continuum of care) to ask if the patient has been vaccinated and use that information upon discharge to offer vaccination information or vaccination.
 - When appropriate, offer vaccination information and guidance on where to get vaccinated to family members and caregivers.

- 2. COVID-19 Vaccinations at the Emergency Department:** When and where appropriate, have COVID-19 vaccines available in emergency departments (ED). Assess whether patients presenting to the ED have been vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine, and when appropriate, offer vaccinations to those who have not been vaccinated. If needed, provide information regarding follow-up for second dose. With those patients that are hesitant, try to engage in a conversation to explore their concerns and offer guidance on where to get vaccinated for the patient as well as their family members and caregivers as appropriate.

- 3. COVID-19 Vaccinations upon Hospital Discharge:** Before discharge, ask patients whether they've been vaccinated with the COVID-19 vaccine, and offer vaccinations to those who have not been where appropriate. If needed, provide information regarding follow-up for second dose. With those patients that are hesitant, try to engage in a conversation to explore their concerns and offer guidance on where to get vaccinated for the patient as well as their family members and caregivers as appropriate.

- 4. COVID-19 Vaccinations at the Health System Ambulatory Network:** The ambulatory network of each health system will make the vaccine available to their patients when and where possible. In addition, as appropriate, we will proactively reach out to our unvaccinated patients to engage them in getting vaccinated if they haven't already (e.g. education/book appointments, etc) and offer the vaccine to patients who come in for care. With those patients that are hesitant, we will engage in a conversation to explore their concerns and where appropriate, offer vaccination information and guidance on where to get vaccinated.

 - To assist with administration of the vaccine, we will have a toolkit and best practices available regarding COVID-19 vaccinations in the ambulatory setting including administration guidance and storage requirements.
- 5. COVID-19 Vaccinations throughout Continuum of Care:** When possible we will make vaccinations available to patients and staff across all health services in our continuum of care, including closely aligned post-acute health services. For example, this could include home based vaccination programs or reaching out to the elderly and vulnerable in nursing homes or rehab centers.
- 6. Leverage Partnerships with Community and Faith-Based Organizations:** We are committed to partnering with and working with community and faith-based organizations to reach vulnerable populations eligible to receive the vaccine and remove barriers to access. This requires different strategies in order to identify the best ways to reach our diverse communities.