



The American Health Care Association & National Center for Assisted Living

COVID-19 Vaccination:

Tactics for Effectively Communicating with Staff

The long term care (LTC) profession is at the forefront of the COVID-19 vaccine distribution process. LTC will play a key role in reducing the prevalence and impact of COVID-19 and promoting vaccine safety and uptake. Ensuring staff in all LTC and senior living settings receive the COVID-19 vaccine will be vital in saving lives.

There are several tactics facilities and companies can implement to build confidence in the vaccine among staff.

1. Communicate often and in multiple ways to emphasize the importance of getting vaccinated.

Examples include:

- **Existing Opportunities:** Dedicate time at regular staff meetings to share information. Allow staff to share their thoughts and concerns openly, honestly, and without fear of being judged. Be clear it is a safe space.
- **Electronic Communications:** Provide information promoting vaccine confidence and safety in emails, e-newsletters, on the company's intranet, and other electronic communication. Provide new information, data, and positive media coverage as it becomes available. Resources and template materials can be found on AHCA/NCAL's [#GetVaccinated](#) webpage.
- **Promotional Videos:** Develop promotional videos showcasing why staff are planning to get vaccinated, or with footage of previous vaccination clinics.
- **Social Media:** Take advantage of social media to build confidence about the vaccine from peers. Be sure to use the hashtag **#GetVaccinated**. Sample content might include:
 - **Showing staff members** who have chosen to get the vaccine doing just that, and share their positive stories.
 - **Videos from a medical expert** to help explain why it's important and safe to be vaccinated. Examples can be found on the AHCA/NCAL [#GetVaccinated](#) webpage.
 - **Positive media stories** about the vaccine.
 - **Highlight new resources** (such as webinars) from your state association, [AHCA/NCAL](#), [CDC](#), [FDA](#), and other key organizations.

2. Schedule a town hall meeting: Town hall meetings are powerful tools to communicate information about the vaccine and provide an open forum for staff to share concerns. This can be done in the center or virtually, depending on time and capabilities.

Best practices for town halls include:

- Have general questions ready to generate discussion.
- Acknowledge the validity of each question.
- Answer the questions as they come in; don't push a specific flow.
- Provide answers that are factual, do not try to be overly positive.
- Acknowledge your own concerns or personal experience with the vaccine.
- Don't push staff to change their mind, you are there to answer their questions and allow them to make an informed decision.

3. Engage trusted voices to answer questions and emphasize the importance of vaccinations.

- **Health Care Experts:** Have knowledgeable and trusted people, such as your medical director, available to speak to staff and answer questions. Try to engage experts that understand your staff's perspective and concerns.
- **Peer-to-Peer:** While hearing from health care experts is important, peer-to-peer influence is also a powerful tool. Ask peers and peer leaders on your staff to be first in line for the vaccine and to promote and support widespread vaccination.

4. Actively combat misinformation.

- Quickly identify and share information responding to false stories that your staff may be hearing about the vaccine.

5. Build community partnerships.

- Messages are impactful when there is support from external community leaders, organizations, and groups.
- Reach out to local churches, community centers, senior centers, and other community organizations to discuss how you can work together to encourage vaccination. Examples might include:
 - Recording a **short video** together about why it is important to get the vaccine for social media. Provide hope, a positive message for staff and residents alike. This can be done as simply as with an iPhone.
 - **Invite someone who can speak about the vaccine** to address staff at a virtual meeting, or even at a "town hall" meeting. This could be a church leader, medical expert, or another trusted community member.

6. Engage staff and residents in the goal of promoting vaccine confidence.

- Convene a staff workgroup and set targets for facility vaccination rates.
- Engage staff to seek information that builds confidence on the vaccines.
- Celebrate vaccination rates (see ideas below).

7. Use a declination form.

- Research has shown that use of declination forms may increase vaccination rates by reinforcing the risks of declining the vaccine.
- Declination forms can provide an opportunity to identify and address staff concerns using the strategies outlined in this document.

8. Invite the local media to cover vaccine clinics at your center.

- If possible, determine a staff member who would be willing to be a champion for the vaccine who could be interviewed.
- Share these stories in your regular communications with staff and on social media.
- Utilize template press materials available on the AHCA/NCAL [#GetVaccinated](#) webpage.

9. Celebrate vaccinations.

- Create collateral to post around the center and for staff to wear to indicate they have been vaccinated. This is also an opportunity to show the outside community that staff is being vaccinated at a center.
 - **Examples:** Buttons, window placards, lawn signs, display banners, posters, and stickers. Utilize the AHCA/NCAL [#GetVaccinated](#) and [#GotVaccinated](#) graphics to develop collateral.
- Take pictures or videos of staff sharing the reasons why they have chosen to be vaccinated.

10. Don't give up!

- If you experience initial hesitancy from your staff, there's still time to increase uptake rates during future clinics.
- Staff may be more comfortable taking the vaccine after seeing others do the same.

Please email COVID19@ahca.org with any questions.



IMPROVING LIVES *by*
DELIVERING SOLUTIONS *for*
QUALITY CARE