**TO: All Residents, Family Members, and Staff**

**FROM: Rocky Knoll Leadership Team**

**DATE: December 18, 2020**

**SUBJECT: COVID-19 Vaccines**

By now you have probably learned that one COVID-19 vaccine has been approved and ready for distribution with others soon to follow. The first to receive these vaccines are healthcare workers and residents in long term care. We are tentatively expected to start the vaccination process the week of December 28th, pending approval of the Moderna vaccine this week. We have long awaited this exciting news as the vaccine is an additional step to help us protect ourselves. We know you want to stay safe and part of that involves ensuring you have the information you need about the vaccines to make an informed decision.

We understand that some of you may be concerned about the safety of these new vaccines, as they have been developed and tested far more quickly than those in the past. We want to assure you that the speed with which these vaccines were developed is not due to skipping important safety steps, but rather the result of focused, collaborative work performed by experts across the globe. Vaccines approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration have undergone the same level of rigorous testing for safety and efficacy as other vaccines, and have been tested in tens of thousands of people, including older adults. Two independent advisory committees of experts from academic institutions also monitor vaccines to ensure their safety.

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine requires two separate doses given 28 days apart. Participants of clinical trials have reported experiencing short-term side effects after being vaccinated, that include headache, muscle pains, fatigue, chills, fever and pain at the injection site. Sometimes there is misunderstanding about the cause of these reactions. You may have heard someone say a vaccine has “made them sick” or given them the disease that the vaccine was intended to prevent. We want to be clear that this is not the case. The COVID-19 vaccine cannot give you a COVID-19 infection. The vaccine works by stimulating your body’s natural immune system to be able to fight off the virus if you are exposed.

We, along with thousands of other long-term care facilities, are participating in a program with the Centers for Disease Control to help us efficiently distribute vaccines to our residents and staff, free of charge, once they are available. Rocky Knoll has partnered with Omnicare/CVS Pharmacy, to hold several vaccination clinics at the facility over the next few months. Once the exact dates and times of those clinics are established we will let you know. Each resident who will be receiving a vaccine will need a consent form filled out prior to the vaccination clinic date. An example of the consent form can be found on our website. Once the finalized consent forms are available, we will have a short turn-around time to get these filled out, signed and returned.

We encourage you to reach out to us if you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, its possible side effects, and what to expect after you or a loved one receives it. As we have been saying over the course of this difficult year, we are all in this together. Please know that the safety and wellbeing of our staff and residents have been and remain our top priority. We are confident that the worldwide, unprecedented scientific achievement of these COVID-19 vaccines will eventually enable us to enjoy life with our loved ones again. We look forward to doing our part in this effort by getting the COVID-19 vaccine, and hope you will join us. Please see our website [www.myrockyknoll.com/news](http://www.myrockyknoll.com/news) for links to important websites that can help you make an informed decision. We will be holding Town Hall Meetings on each unit to address any questions or concerns of residents.

**What can you find on the website?**

* Example of the COVID Vaccine Consent Form
* Moderna COVID Vaccine Timeline and Information about the Vaccine
* Food and Drug Administration – Emergency Use Authorization for Vaccines Explained
* Wisconsin Department of Health Services – COVID-19 Vaccine: What You Need to Know
* Sheboygan County Public Health – COVID Vaccine Information Page
* Centers for Disease Control – COVID Vaccine Information Page with a wealth of resources
* Questions and Answers about the COVID-19 Vaccine for PALTC (Post-Acute Long Term Care)

Staff, Patients, Residents and Family

**What do you need to do now?**

Please review this information and if you have any questions reach out to Kelli Sohn our Infection Preventionist at 920-449-1256.

**What are the next steps?**

Watch for future communication on the date(s) of the COVID vaccine clinics and the process to receive, fill-out and return the consent forms for the residents and staff members to get on the list to receive a COVID vaccine.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in this very important next step in the fight against COVID-19 and protecting our residents and staff members.