

An Important Update from the Infection Prevention Team



COVID-19 Vaccine: What We Do and Do Not Know, and What BAYADA is Doing

December 23, 2020

As part of BAYADA's commitment to providing the highest quality of clinical care to our clients, BAYADA is taking measures to ensure our employees and clients are protected from the COVID-19 virus.

A new component of BAYADA's safety strategies is the COVID-19 vaccination. While there is still much to be discovered about the vaccine, we want to share the information we know—and do not know— at this time about this important vaccination, as well as the actions BAYADA is taking regarding it.

What BAYADA is Doing

- **Each state has developed their own vaccination deployment plan**, meaning BAYADA needs to understand the prioritization of Home Health and Home Care clinicians in each state in which we practice, and how and when to access the administration sites.
- Our COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force is actively exploring options to provide the vaccine to **all BAYADA employees**.
- Interested BAYADA field employees and clinical leaders that go into clients' homes are our **first priority for vaccination**. This group was surveyed on December 18 for interest in getting vaccinated.
- BAYADA will **cover the cost** for all employees for the initial wave of vaccines.
- COVID-19 vaccination is **strongly recommended** and will not be mandatory at this time.
- Our primary pharmaceutical partner for the administration of the vaccine is **Aetna/CVS**, in conjunction with federal and state-level efforts.
- **Senior living communities** in most states are early in the prioritization of vaccine administration. Multiple communities have offered to vaccinate BAYADA employees when the facilities are scheduled to receive the vaccination. BAYADA and congregate living leadership are working to ensure safety protocols are in place.
- **State-specific communication/requests for employee counts or names** requested for COVID vaccination planning are being centrally managed; inquiries sent to offices should be routed through COVID-19-Info@bayada.com. We are **providing employee names, birth date, and non-sensitive information** to the Department of Health (DOH) upon request to advocate for our employees' ability to be prioritized to receive the vaccination, if desired, as early as possible.
- We are exploring options to **best track vaccinations**; employees already vaccinated should let their respective office know so the office can maintain a list of vaccinated staff. All employees should save any vaccination card/documentation.

What We Do Know

The two vaccines available at this time are the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccines, for which the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA). The Pfizer vaccine is approved for those 16 years of age and older, and the Moderna vaccine is approved for those 18 years of age and older. Here are some facts about the two approved COVID-19 vaccines.

General:

- It is not a live vaccine.
- The vaccine cannot cause a COVID-19 infection.
- Once vaccinated, **employees will continue to need to social distance, wear masks, handwash in the community, and wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when providing clinical care to BAYADA clients** until the CDC relaxes those requirements, which occurs when a significant number of citizens have been vaccinated.
- Health care personnel (HCP) should continue to follow all current CDC infection prevention and control recommendations to protect themselves and others from SARS-CoV-2 infection, regardless of their vaccination status.
- Positive viral (nucleic acid or antigen) tests for SARS-CoV-2, if performed, should not be attributed to the COVID-19 vaccine, as vaccination does not influence the results of these tests.

Dosage and Administration:

- It requires two doses of vaccine, delivered via intramuscular injection. The Pfizer vaccines are provided three weeks apart, and the Moderna vaccines are administered four weeks apart. The administration of second dose has a four-day grace period in which it is considered valid.
- Both doses are required for protection. The efficacy of a single dose has not been evaluated.
- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are not interchangeable with one another, or with other COVID-19 vaccines. Both doses should be from the same manufacturer.
- The COVID-19 vaccine should not be administered with other vaccines. Individuals should not receive other vaccines within 14 days prior to and after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Efficacy:

- The vaccine provides protection one to two weeks after the second dose is provided. Efficacy after the second dose is 95 percent for Pfizer and 94.1 percent for Moderna.

Deferrals/Timing:

- The vaccine is deferred for 90 days for those who received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma.
- For those who are currently symptomatic or COVID-positive, the vaccine is deferred until symptom resolution (per criteria to discontinue precautions). Reinfection is uncommon in the 90 days after initial infection, and thus, persons with documented acute infection in the preceding 90 days may defer vaccination until the end of this period, if desired.
- For the general community, the vaccine is deferred after a known exposure until an individual's quarantine has ended. However, residents in a congregate living setting who have had a known exposure can receive the vaccine due to increased risk for contracting COVID-19.

Individual scenarios:

- The vaccine is offered regardless of an individual's history of (a) symptomatic **COVID-19 positivity**.
- There is no data on the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine for **pregnant/lactating women**. There is no recommendation to exclude pregnant health care workers or those who are immunocompromised. These individuals should consult with their health care providers to make an informed decision.
- Contraindications apply to those with **history of anaphylaxis** to any component of the vaccine.

What We Do Not Know

- We do not yet know **the dates of when** BAYADA will offer the vaccine to employees, although we do know that our primary pharmaceutical partner for the administration of the vaccine is Aetna/CVS, in conjunction with federal and state-level efforts.
- We do not yet know **how long it will take to learn about sustained immunity**.
 - The protection someone gains from having an infection (called natural immunity) varies depending on the disease and the individual. Since this virus is new, we do not know how long natural immunity might last. Some early evidence—based on some individuals—seems to suggest that natural immunity may not last very long.
 - Regarding vaccination, we will not know how long immunity lasts until we have more data on how well the vaccine works.
 - Both natural and vaccine-induced immunity are important aspects of COVID-19 that experts are trying to learn more about. The CDC will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.