

# GREATER NEW YORK NEWS

Greater New York Health Care Facilities Association

FOR THE NEWS THAT MATTERS TO OUR MEMBERS



## Emerging SARS-CoV-2 Variant

Arlette Drigpaul, MSN, RN, examines a new strain of SARS-CoV-2 and provides recommendations for facilities to have in place in order to take a proactive step in combating the effects of the new strain.

## New COVID-19 Cares Act Bill

George Horowitz, Financial Consultant, GNYHCFA, discusses the new relief bill that was passed on December 20, 2020, providing details of what is included in the new legislation and when it will go into effect.

## Life Safety Review

John Kerney, Life Safety Consultant, encourages facilities to get their new records and logs in place, while reminding facilities to review the provided list of annual items that should be completed.

## December 16, 2020 Webinar Recap

We recently partnered with 1199SEIU Training and Education Fund to bring an informative webinar on implementing a safe COVID-19 Vaccination Program. Experts from the CDC, NYSDOH, and others discussed the latest information on the efficacy of the vaccine as well as Federal and State Distribution plans for LTC facilities.

## Upcoming Webinar

Save the date for our next webinar on **January 14, 2021**. Please be sure to visit our website at [www.gnyhcfa.org](http://www.gnyhcfa.org) for additional information.

# Employee Recognition

Sister Raymond Marie, Jeanne Jugan Residence

## Melanie Sowa – Activities Director

Jeanne Jugan Residence

When asked, we can all say that we know special people we work with or live near who somehow stand out. Why? Not because they are rich or powerful. They are ordinary people who in an extraordinary way live their day to day lives. In a crisis, these special people emerge as “beacons of hope” and shining stars. They are in the forefront in their acts of kindness, compassion, self-sacrifice, devotedness and self-giving. They put themselves and their needs in the background and focus on the needs of others. They inspire those they work with by their example. We have several staff members like that but would like to especially mention our Activity Director, Melanie Sowa. Her devotedness, kind gentle ways, her availability and self-giving made her one of those “beacons” who could always be counted on and there when most needed. We would like to honor Melanie and so many others that have not been mentioned for helping us through these very difficult times.



We ask that facilities send information regarding the celebration of a staff member who went above and beyond during this crisis, as well as any resident to be honored. Please include a picture and a brief summary of why this person was chosen.

# 2020 Thank You

Mary Gracey-White, RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance, GNYHCFA

## A Time to Reflect

As 2020 is coming to a close, I believe it is important to remind us all of the resilience of the Nursing Home Health Care Sector and all that your teams have done to care for the residents, support staff and families in the most trying time most of us have ever experienced.

As we pick up the challenge for a successful vaccination campaign, we are closer to seeing the light at the end of this pandemic. Take a moment or more if you can to remind yourselves of all you and your team have accomplished. Let us try not to allow stress to overshadow all of the joy during this Holiday Season. To continue working to end the pandemic, we need to take care of ourselves in order to care for others. Despite the busy time, try to do the healthy basics we all need. Support each other, take time to rest, try to focus on the positive and find some time to connect with family and friends.

GNYHCFA is committed to supporting our members in the New Year and look forward to hearing from you on what is important to you, your staff and residents. Wishing you all a healthy, blessed and prosperous New Year.

## Emerging SARS-CoV-2 Variant

Arlette Drigpaul, MSN, RN, GNYHCFA

### Emerging SARS-CoV-2 Variant VOC 202012/01

There has been a lot of media coverage the past few days surrounding a new strain of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19 infections. Should we be worried? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the mutation is primarily prevalent in London and Southeast England and is predicted to potentially transmit more rapidly than other circulating strains of SARS-CoV-2. Currently, there is no evidence to suggest that this variant causes more severe illness or increased risk of death. Dr Ralph Baric points out that even though patients infected with the new variant strain are likely to have higher viral loads in the upper respiratory tract, **there is no evidence that related illness is more severe**. Scientists are working diligently to determine whether current authorized vaccines will protect people against this new strain of the virus. In taking a proactive step in combating the effects of the new strain of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, facilities should continue to maintain standard and transmission-based precautions appropriately; continue the use of universal masking and eye protection as source control; maintain social distancing; have a robust Covid-19 Vaccine Immunization Program; and increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection, especially of high touch surfaces and in common areas.

#### **References:**

Baric, R.S. (12/16/2020). Emergence of a Highly Fit SARS-CoV-2 Variant. The New England Journal of Medicine. Retrieved from <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMcibr2032888>  
CDC (12/22/2020). Implications of Emerging SARS-CoV-2 Variant. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-emerging-variant.html>

## New COVID-19 Cares Act Bill

George Horowitz, Financial Consultant, GNYHCFA

Congressional leaders came to an agreement on an approximately \$900 billion relief bill Sunday night, with both houses of congress voting and passing the bill. The President is expected to sign it shortly. The bill extends aid to millions of struggling households through stimulus checks, enhanced federal unemployment benefits and money for small businesses, schools and childcare, as well as for vaccine distribution. It also repurposes \$429 billion in unused funds provided by the Cares Act for emergency lending programs run by the Federal Reserve.

The legislation includes \$600 stimulus checks per person, including adults and children. That means a family of four would receive \$2,400, up to a certain income threshold. Unemployment benefits of up to \$300 per week have been extended. The benefit could kick in as early as Dec. 27 and run at least through March 14. In addition, an unemployment benefits program for contract and gig workers, which is set to expire at the end of the year, would be extended, too.

The bill includes more than \$284 billion for first and second forgivable Paycheck Protection Program loans, expanded PPP eligibility for nonprofit organizations and news outlets, and modifications to the program to serve small businesses, nonprofits and independent restaurants. Businesses that received PPP loans and had them forgiven will be allowed to deduct the costs covered by those loans on their federal tax returns. While the issue had been a point of contention, the costs would be deductible under the final agreement. Also, the package provides \$15 billion for independent movie theaters and cultural institutions, \$20 billion for targeted grants through the Economic Injury Disaster Loans program, a tax break for corporate meal expenses as a way to revive the restaurant industry.

The bill includes \$20 billion for the purchase of vaccines “that will make the vaccine available at no charge for anyone who needs it.” It also provides \$8 billion for vaccine distribution and includes \$20 billion to assist states with testing. Colleges and schools will have \$82 billion to help cover HVAC repair and replacement to reduce the risk of coronavirus infections and reopen classrooms and \$2.75 billion in designated funds for private K-12 education.

Also included is the legislation to end surprise billing for emergency and scheduled care; provides a tax credit to support employers offering paid sick leave; \$13 billion in increased food stamps and nutrition benefits; and \$7 billion to increase access to broadband.

The bill also included \$45 billion for transportation, including \$16 billion for another round of airline employee and contractor payroll support; \$14 billion for transit; \$10 billion for highways; \$2 billion for intercity buses; \$2 billion for airports; and \$1 billion for Amtrak.

The bill also includes \$1.4 billion in new funding for Trump’s border wall with Mexico and new border security technology

# Life Safety Review

John Kerney, Life Safety Consultant, GNYHCFA

## End of Year Reminder

As the year comes to a close, it is time to get our new records and logs in place and review the annual items which we want to have completed.

The following items are not all inclusive, however, they may be missed:

- Annual sprinkler system items such as the tripping of a dry valve if in the system along with cycling all control valves.
- Review the replacement dates of gauges in the sprinkler system.
- Check the pipe hangers and last date for the replacement of dry heads in your freezer or areas subject to freezing.
- The annual 2-inch drain valve flow test for systems with backflow preventers.
  
- The triannual load on emergency generator if required due to insufficient loading during monthly testing.
- The annual fuel sample testing was it completed.
  
- The annual trip test of all GFCI outlets recording the milliamps to trip.
- The annual inspection of all nonhospital grade outlets.
- The annual inspection of medical equipment and the location of user manuals.
  
- The annual back flow preventer test
- The annual elevator inspection
- Annual fire door inspections
- Legionella test report
- The 90-minute battery pack light test

**I would like to thank you all for allowing us to help during this tough operational period and wish you all healthy holiday season and a healthy happy new year.**

# Webinar Recap

## December 16, 2020

### ***New York Nursing Homes and the COVID-19 Vaccine: Get the Facts***

December 2020 Webinar Recap

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Greater New York Healthcare Facilities Association partnered with the with 1199SEIU Training and Employment Funds and hosted a joint webinar to provide the most up to date information on the COVID-19 vaccine.

Dr. Nimalie Stone, MD, MS, who is the Team Lead for the Centers for Disease Control Long-term Care Response, Division of Health Care Quality Promotion began with a discussion of the four phases of clinical trials used to evaluate vaccine safety and efficacy and the various vaccine monitoring systems currently in place. She encouraged staff members to help others to understand that these vaccines are safe, won't cause COVID-19, and that there are benefits to people who have recovered from the virus. Given that the elderly are most vulnerable, it is incredibly important that those caring for this population and at high risk of exposure get vaccinated. Not only can vaccination greatly reduce the potential of transmitting the virus to their residents, families, and communities, but staff also have the ability to positively influence vaccination decisions of peers, residents, friends, and family.

Loretta A. Santilli, MPH joined us from the Office of Public Health Practice at the New York State Department of Health. Mrs. Santilli discussed the logistics of the NYS COVID-19 Vaccination Program and CDC Pharmacy Partnership Program. She emphasized that there have been no serious safety concerns observed in the hundreds of thousands of vaccine trials conducted so far, and that most adverse events were mild to moderate and resolved within 1-2 days. Although it is recommended that facilities begin by vaccinating 1/3 of staff, the State intends to provide all staff who wish to be vaccinated with the opportunity to do so within 30 days.

Dr. Martin Grossman, MD is the Chief Medical Office for Citadel Care Centers. He shared with us the importance of having facility leadership, such as the Director of Nursing and Medical Director, involved in the vaccination process. He empowered nursing staff, who are historically the most trusted health care professionals according to a recent Gallop poll, to play an active role in the promotion and widespread adoption of the vaccine. Dr. Grossman also provided tips and strategies for how facilities can best prepare for the arrival of the vaccine.

Dr. Van H. Dunn, MD, who is the Chief Medical Officer for the 1199SEIU Benefit and Pension Fund, concluded the presentation by asserting the vaccine as a powerful tool against the pandemic and a way in which we can strengthen the protection of our communities. He recommended that individuals visit his website FAQs section which can be found [here](#). We also encourage you to visit the CDC's FAQs regarding the vaccine, for more information, please click [here](#).

Lastly, Dr. Dunn welcomes individuals to reach out to him directly with any questions or concerns as he enjoys being able to personally provide clarity and reassurance. Please email any questions to [HealthyLiving@1199Funds.org](mailto:HealthyLiving@1199Funds.org).

Keep an eye out for more information regarding our next webinar in January 2021.