

GREATER NEW YORK NEWS

Greater New York Health Care Facilities Association

FOR THE NEWS THAT MATTERS TO OUR MEMBERS



New COVID-19 Strains

Mary Gracey-White, RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance and Arlette Drigpaul, MSN, RN, examine the new strains of COVID-19 and provides recommendations in continuing to mitigate the spread in our Long-Term Care facilities.

Revised Paycheck Protection Program

George Horowitz, Financial Consultant, GNYHCFA, discusses the revised Paycheck Protection Program under the COVID-Related Tax Relief Act, and provides details of what is included in this new Act.

Life Safety Review

John Kerney, Life Safety Consultant, encourages facilities to review their elevator entrapment policy, and provides tips to help someone if one should find themselves stuck inside a stalled elevator cab.

January 14, 2021 Webinar Recap

Our latest webinar explored vaccination roll out and what to expect based on early experiences as well as preparing for the second dose of vaccinations. Please find a summary of the topics discussed on page 7.

Upcoming Webinar

Save the date for our next webinar on **February 24, 2021**. Please be sure to visit our website at www.gnyhcfa.org for additional information.

Employee Recognition

Michael Melnicke & Andrew Turk, Rockaway Care Center

Mr. Andrew Turk and Mr. Michael Melnicke have supported their facility through this pandemic. Now, they have done their part in helping to end the pandemic by receiving both doses of their COVID-19 vaccinations!

Michael Melnicke, Owner

“I would like to thank the dedicated nursing staff and all departments who did everything to protect and care for so many throughout this dreadful pandemic. I am so proud of my entire staff who battled this disease. In working together, hopefully, this vaccine we are receiving will be the tool to eradicate this deadly pandemic.”

Andrew Turk, Administrator

“I would like to thank all the staff for their loyalty during this pandemic. They are true heroes. Our staff continues to work together, including taking the vaccines as we hope to end the pandemic.”



“We got ours, you should too!”

Vaccination Encouragement

Hon. Michael Balboni, Executive Director, GNYHCFA

Happy New Year to all. Last year was by far the most challenging year we have ever faced as an industry and our losses, both personally and professionally will mark this time forever.

As we look to the year ahead, we find ourselves in a position filled with questions, doubt and yet hope.

The vaccine roll out has been one of starts and stops, great expectations, and misinformation and reasons for concern. Yet, the vaccine is the gateway back to a time of personal safety, family visitation and a sense of normalcy in our facilities.

The key to any great effort among a large population is planning, preparation, resources, transparency and real time information. The State is trying its best to get “needles in arms” in such a way as to develop Herd Immunity as quickly as possible. Our jobs are to help lead in that effort by instilling in our residents and workforce the confidence to “get the shot and live again.” In one sense, this is the most important undertaking we have ever had in Long-Term Care.

At our Association, we have held several webinars with expert speakers to drive home the safety and essential nature of this vaccination. We will continue this effort and with your help, we will see to it that as many people who can be vaccinated, will be vaccinated.

New COVID-19 Strains

Mary Gracey-White, RN, Director of Regulatory Compliance, GNYHCFA, Arlette Drigpaul, MSN, RN, GNYHCFA

Are the New COVID-19 Strains Dangerous?

Vaccinate to Protect Our Residents, Families and Colleagues

Viruses constantly undergo mutations, commonly known as variants or strains, which are *expected* to occur over time. Of notable concern are the strains of Covid-19 that originated in the United Kingdom (B.1.1.7), South Africa (1.351), and Brazil (P.1). Currently, there are 122 known cases of B.1.1.7 in the United States, 4 in New York State (CDC, 1/18/2021). These new strains appear to latch onto our cells more efficiently, suggesting that it could take less virus and less time for someone to become ill. Though these strains seem to spread more easily and quickly than others, *there is no evidence that suggests that they cause more severe illness or increased risk of death* (CDC, 1/15/2021).

Notably, a study conducted by Pfizer-BioNTech, of the Covid-19 vaccine developed by the two companies, claims to be effective against the B.1.1.7 variant! (Ellis, 2021). This is even more reason to promote a robust Covid-19 vaccination program by providing education and resources for residents, families, and staff. Appoint vaccine ambassadors, those who will educate about and encourage vaccinations and streamline processes for a smooth vaccination rollout. **Stress that if staff do not take advantage of getting vaccinated in the facility, it may take months before they can get vaccinated in the community given the current shortage of vaccines in NYS.** GNYHCFA will keep members informed as additional information is received regarding vaccination availability in the community, as well as any NYSDOH updates for vaccination at the facility level.

In addition to vaccinations, other measures proven effective to prevent and reduce the spread of Covid-19 include utilizing universal masking and eye protection, maintaining social distancing including when in the break room and locker rooms, and practicing effective hand hygiene. Taking it further, ensure that staff are appropriately furloughed as necessary and residents are appropriately cohorted. Ensure that personal protective equipment (PPEs) are used appropriately, group activities are within recommended parameters, and appropriate signage are posted throughout the building. Lastly, but equally important, increase cleaning and disinfection of equipment and of environmental surfaces with EPA-approved N-List disinfecting agents.

Resources:

CDC (1/15/2021). Frequently Asked Questions About Covid-19 Vaccination. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>

CDC (1/15/2021). New Covid-19 Variants. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant.html>

CDC (1/18/2021). US COVID-19 Cases Caused by Variants. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/transmission/variant-cases.html>

Ellis, R. (1/8/2021). Pfizer Vaccine Appears to Work Against Variant, Research Shows. https://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/943834?src=WNL_infoc_210121_MSCPEDIT&uac=122967BK&impID=3142427&faf=1

Revised Paycheck Protection Program

George Horowitz, Financial Consultant, GNYHCFA

Under the COVID-Related Tax Relief Act

On December 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the COVID-Related Tax Relief Act (**COVIDTRA**), a \$908 billion relief package. The new law contains a number of new tax provisions, expansion and extension of existing tax provisions, and modifications to and expansion of the Paycheck Protection Program. In this section, we will focus on the Payroll Protection Program.

The new Act provides a second round of Paycheck Protection Program loans, provides that any amount forgiven under the PPP provisions is excluded from income, overrides the IRS's position regarding deductibility of expenses incurred with forgiven Paycheck Protection Programs funds and simplifies the forgiveness process for many taxpayers. The new round of PPP loans ("PPP2") will be available to qualified borrowers who have not received prior PPP loans as well as those that have received loans under the initial Program. For a business that previously received a PPP loan to be eligible for PPP2, the business (i) can employ no more than 300 employees; (b) must have used the entire amount of the first PPP loan (or will use such entire amount); and (c) must have had gross receipts during Q1, Q2 or Q3 2020 that were at least 25% less than the corresponding quarter in 2019 (Q4 of 2020 can be used if the application for the loan is made after January 1, 2021). First-time borrowers are not subject to these limitations. The maximum loan amount has been reduced under PPP2 to \$2.0 million for those that had previously received a loan.

Forgiveness applications for loans under \$150,000 will be a simplified one-page certification that will include a description of the number of employees the company retained because of the loan, the estimated total amount of the loan spent on payroll costs and the total loan amount. To be eligible for full forgiveness, borrowers are still required to spend at least 60% of the funds on payroll. The other 40% can be used on eligible costs. Under COVIDTRA the types of expenses that are considered eligible costs has expanded. In addition to payroll, rent, utilities and mortgage interest, the PPP proceeds can now be used for (i) Covered Operations Expenditures (business software/cloud computing services, processing, payment or tracking of payroll expenses, HR and billing functions or tracking of supplies, inventory, records and expenses); (ii) Covered Property Damage Costs (costs related to property damaged and vandalism or looting that was not covered by insurance); (iii) Covered Supplier Costs (expenditures to a supplier of goods that are essential to the operations of the business and made pursuant to a contract in place prior to the start of the covered period); and (iv) Covered Worker Protection Equipment (operating or capital expenditures that allow the business to comply with CDC, HHS, OSHA or any other governmental requirements during the period beginning March 1, 2020 and ending on the date the declared national emergency expires).

Life Safety Review

John Kerney, Life Safety Consultant, GNYHCFA

Elevator Entrapment Review

Elevator systems are a sophisticated and technological combination of shafts, connections, weights, and counterweights, which move people from floor to floor in buildings of varying heights. Sometimes the elevator car can suddenly morph from a convenient transportation option to a claustrophobic prison, should it grind to a halt en route to your destination. As frightening as being stuck in an elevator might seem, elevator systems are designed to keep you safe. You are in more danger attempting to escape from the cab without the help from qualified personnel.

The following suggestions will keep you safe if you should find yourself stuck inside a stalled elevator cab:

1. Remain calm

First and foremost, do not panic. The elevator will not fall, nor will you suffocate.

2. Let others know you are trapped

Modern elevator cabs have some way to communicate with the outside world, should you become stuck. Some cabs offer an alarm button while others provide an emergency phone behind a panel, or a two-way call button. Find that button or phone and use it to initiate the rescue process.

3. Stay put, wait it out

Do not try to break through the trap door at the top of the cab. The elevator could either start moving again causing likely injury, or you could fall down the elevator shaft. The advice is to remain where you are. You will be safer this way.

4. Keep the door shut

Do not try to jimmy open the elevator cab door. You could damage the elevator mechanism, making rescue more difficult. Additionally, elevator cabs could start moving without any warning, and that open elevator door could put you at risk.

5. Keep still and get comfortable

Do not to jump up and down in a mistaken belief that it will cause the elevator cab to move. Doing so could impact the brake system or shift the car. In addition to feeling a stalled elevator car drop a few feet, such a shift could mean rescuers might have more trouble reaching you. Please review your facilities elevator entrapment policy.

A sample Policy/Procedure is available to members on our [website](#). To find it, please go to Member Center - Tools and Resources – Policies and Procedures.

Webinar Recap

January 14, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccination Roll Out: How is it Going?

Greater New York Health Care Facilities Association put forward a webinar on January 14, 2021 to provide updates on the latest information relating to COVID-19 vaccination. Hosted by Hon. Michael Balboni, Executive Director, GNYHCFA, the webinar included three speakers, Milly Silva, Sandi Vito and Dr. Hallett, who provided insight on early experiences and preparing for the second dose.

Milly Silva, Executive Vice President, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, informed attendees that they continue to host webinars and townhall meetings to grant medical experts the opportunity to speak directly to 1199SEIU members as it relates to the vaccine. 1199SEIU consistently encourages educating nursing home employees, urging them to take advantage of their ability to be vaccinated.

Sandi Vito, Executive Director, 1199SEIU Training and Employment Funds, spoke of resources that 1199SEIU has made available to all members. Currently, *The Training and Employment Fund* is identifying student and retirees who can vaccinate, and who are willing to serve as vaccinators to assist as needed.

Dr. William C. Hallett, Pharm.D., MBA, BCG, President/CEO, Guardian Consulting Services, Inc., presented on several common reasons for staff hesitation in being vaccinated, and scientifically responded to those concerns. Dr. Hallett reiterated the 95% effectivity rate of the Pfizer vaccine and reminded attendees that there is no live virus in the COVID-19 vaccine. He explained side effects of those being vaccinated. For instance, should someone have had COVID-19 previously, their reaction to the vaccine may be stronger.

Dr. Hallett discussed resident acceptance of the vaccine compared to staff acceptance. The reason is believed to be the perception from the older generations and that they are more vulnerable, which is why they want to protect themselves in receiving the vaccine. Additionally, due to the way immune systems function as people age, residents are less likely to experience extreme side effects. On the contrary, staff, or younger people, are more likely to take a “wait and see” approach, which is a concern. He explained the responsibility he has, alongside the management of nursing homes to be ready with answers to reasonable questions of staff and continue direct efforts to encourage staff vaccination. Dr Hallett and GNYHCFA staff responded and released a Q&A from participants questions from the webinar.

Lastly, Dr. Hallett spoke about the monoclonal antibody treatment, which is a synthetically produced version of proteins made by the immune system that are known to be active against SARS-CoV-2. Currently, two drugs are approved and offered an approximate 70% reduction in progression to serious disease. Nursing homes are able to access these treatments from their pharmacies. These treatments can potentially reduce avoidable hospitalizations and improve outcomes for our nursing home population.

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