

## COVID-19 Vaccination Update

February 5, 2021, Friday

Johnson & Johnson applied last night for emergency use authorization (EUA) for their COVID-19 vaccine. The data they released contain more truly hopeful signs.

Across all test sites in all regions, including South Africa and its new virus variant, the vaccine was 85 percent effective at preventing severe disease, and 100 percent effective at preventing hospitalization and death.

Mount Sinai Brooklyn and Mount Sinai Queens were trial sites for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The lead investigator at Mount Sinai Queens was the hospital's epidemiologist, Dana Mazo, MD, MSc. *Mount Sinai Today* has just published [an interview](#) with Dr. Mazo in which she talks about some of the reasons why this vaccine could be a game changer: it requires only one dose, and does not require ultra-cold storage. It is well worth your time to read.

But here is the most important point: All of the vaccines that have reported phase 3 clinical trial results to date—Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, and even the Russian vaccine called Sputnik V, which published results recently in *The Lancet*—have shown essentially the same thing: **They offer near-total protection against hospitalization and death.**

That is the real headline.

Once we are able to decrease the incidence of severe COVID-19 and the need for patients to be hospitalized, our hospitals and school will be able to return to normal operations. Our extraordinary health care teams would get a well-deserved opportunity to relax, take vacations, and live normal lives free from the pressure we know all of you have been feeling.

We can get there by taking one simple step: getting as much of the population vaccinated as possible. (And, in the interim, by continuing to practice the strategies we know will help decrease transmission, including masking and social distancing.)

Now, we know it is not that simple. Vaccine production needs to continue to accelerate and more vaccines need to be authorized by the Food and Drug Administration. Having more authorized vaccines will broaden the supply chain, and move us closer to the goal of offering protection to as many people as possible.

Also, we know it is not simple to administer the vaccines. Many hundreds from our Mount Sinai family have devoted long hours, including evenings and weekends, to helping out at our vaccine pods. Some of you are doing this instead of, or on top of, your normal jobs. You have had to cope with ever-changing rules and guidelines, sudden stops and starts for the vaccine supply, and even a near-record snowstorm. Nevertheless, you have now vaccinated more than 31,000 members of our Mount Sinai family—and our patients to the extent that the vaccine supply and state guidelines have allowed.

We do not know whether or when Johnson & Johnson's vaccine will get an EUA, nor whether any will be allocated to us if it does. If we do get some, it will require a different, though hopefully simpler, workflow than the other vaccines. But we know that somehow, you will make it work.

It will still take a few months to get where we are going. But we can see the destination more and more clearly now. It is a bright future. We are thankful to, and extremely proud of, every one of you for helping to make it so.

**Kenneth L. Davis, MD**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Mount Sinai Health System

**Dennis S. Charney, MD**

Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean  
Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai  
President for Academic Affairs

Mount Sinai Health System