

COVID-19 Vaccination Update

February 26, 2021, Friday

This weekend marks a somber anniversary. It was roughly one year ago, on February 29, 2020, that the first patient with COVID-19 presented at a Mount Sinai Health System hospital.

We are planning a number of activities in March to commemorate this, which you will hear more about soon. Today, we want to focus on one number: 9,805. That is the number of COVID-19 patients whom you have healed and sent home since the pandemic first reached our doors.

Through all the trial, tribulation, heartbreak, exhaustion, and fear, you fulfilled our mission to heal the sick and take care of our communities. Nearly 10,000 people were able to go home to their loved ones because of your efforts. We are grateful. Our city and our region are grateful. And most of all, those patients and their families are grateful.

Nearly 10,000 people.

We could never have foreseen that number a year ago. Nor could we have foreseen the swift advent of vaccines against this horrible disease. It is truly remarkable that in less than a year, we have two highly efficacious vaccines to offer to our front-line health care workers and our patients, with a third—the one from Johnson & Johnson—likely to receive emergency use authorization within the next few days.

And there is now evidence, reported in [The New England Journal of Medicine](#), that the Pfizer vaccine, at least, works as well in the real world as it did in clinical trials. The study was conducted in Israel, which is among the world's leaders in vaccinating its people, and found that the vaccine reduced symptomatic cases by 94 percent a week after the second dose, and reduced severe disease by 92 percent. Also, the vaccine appears to work against the British variant B.1.1.7, which became established in Israel during the study period, the researchers said. This is very good news.

As you know, this week we resumed vaccinating eligible employees and patients. In line with current guidelines, we are identifying the most vulnerable patients from our records, including those with complex diseases, members of minority groups, and residents of Brooklyn and Queens, and reaching out to these patients directly—and through community groups—to offer appointments. This is an important effort to ensure equity in access to vaccines, which is consistent with our Health System’s values and priorities. We hope that future increases in the vaccine supply make it possible to open our doors to a wider range of people, including eligible employees working remotely and other members of the public, but for now, this is the right thing to do.

As of yesterday evening, more than 34,000 members of the Mount Sinai family had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, and nearly 29,000 had received both doses. If you are an onsite faculty or staff member, student, trainee, or a voluntary physician or a patient-facing staff member at a voluntary practice, and you have not yet been vaccinated, you can put your name on the waiting list [here](#). As long as we continue to receive new shipments of vaccine, the wait should not be too long.

We want to end, as we always do, by thanking you for your hard work. We know what you have been going through. It is not easy to keep this up, day after day, week after week, in what seems like an unending crisis. Our COVID-19-positive patient count continues to decline sharply this week, though at some of our hospitals more than at others. But we do know that the vaccination program will help and that there will be an end to this struggle. Until it arrives, please take good care of yourselves and your colleagues. We have recently updated the [wellness resources](#) list, and they continue to be available to anyone who might need them. They are there for you.

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