

COVID-19 Vaccination Update, January 22

It was a week to look back and look forward. We commemorated the life and teachings of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on Monday, and observed the transfer of power to a new administration on Wednesday. We saw the highest COVID-19 inpatient numbers since May even as we resumed giving our patients the vaccinations that will eventually bring this pandemic to an end.

We want to end this week, as we have so often, with gratitude. Gratitude for your continued perseverance even in the face of frustration. We know that for many of you, the work feels Sisyphean, pushing the rock up the mountain without ever reaching the top. No sooner do we heal one set of patients—whether from COVID-19 or the many other conditions they seek treatment for here—and send them home to their loved ones than others appear at our doors. It is unrelenting, and you are tired. Nevertheless, you keep doing it. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

You may ask, when will it end? We cannot give you a specific answer, but there are new reasons for hope.

As many of you know, we received additional vaccine supply this week and were able both to serve our patients with vaccine appointments from Wednesday through this weekend, and to reschedule many of the patients whose appointments were canceled last weekend. We also were able to bring some patients forward from next week into this week. We are grateful for the continued nimbleness and flexibility of everyone involved in the vaccine pods. Vaccine supplies are still uncertain and we will have to take it one day at a time. Our guiding principle is to get as many shots into as many arms of those eligible as quickly as the vaccine supply will permit. Each shot we give brings the end of this pandemic a little bit closer. And each of you who reaches down inside for that extra bit of effort to make those shots possible brings us closer to that end.

There is new reason for hope as well in the New York State test positivity rates. Positive tests appear to have peaked about a week ago across our region. The seven-day moving averages stood as of yesterday at 5.7 percent for New York City, 7.4 percent for Long Island, and 7 percent for the Mid-Hudson region. We hope to see these numbers decline over the next few weeks. And since hospitalizations typically lag positive tests by a couple of weeks, our COVID-19 patient numbers could start to come down as well.

One additional reason for hope is that we expect additional skilled nursing facility space for COVID-19-positive patients to come online next week. This will allow us to discharge additional patients and ease the pressure on all of you who are caring for them.

We are not out of the woods yet. The next several weeks will continue to test us. But please know that you are meeting that test, and we are confident that you will continue doing so. Know that your work matters. Your efforts are noticed—and not just by us, but more importantly, by the patients we are here to serve. You are still the heroes of our city and our time.

Know too that heroes are human, heroes get tired, and heroes can be frustrated. Even heroes need the [wellness resources](#) that we have put together over the past year; please use as many of them as you need to, as often as you need to. Heroism does not consist of raw, unflagging strength. Heroism is overcoming weakness, doubt, and despair to do what must be done anyway. That is the heroism you have shown, and the heroism that we are truly thankful for.

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