



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Baptist Health Care COVID-19 Update #26

Jan. 19, 2020

Baptist supports vaccination events

Baptist Health Care shares Governor DeSantis' goal for an effective, efficient and urgent deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine. With that goal in mind, Baptist is supporting regional efforts to distribute the vaccine by scheduling vaccination appointments for those who have registered through the Escambia County and Santa Rosa County health departments. Baptist is also providing clinical staff to administer the vaccinations.

Vaccination events are taking place on an ongoing basis throughout the community as vaccine supplies are received locally from the state of Florida. Vaccinations are given by appointment only to those who meet the criteria of the state of Florida's vaccination plan and have pre-registered through the county health departments. The timely scheduling of appointments, rather than a walk-in type procedure, provides a more comfortable experience for those being vaccinated and helps ensure that infection prevention precautions are followed for the safety of all.

The COVID-19 vaccine

Baptist Health Care Corporate Director of Pharmacy Rudy Seelmann, PharmD, says the COVID-19 vaccine uses messenger RNA technology that has been studied since the mid-1990s. The vaccine causes a person's cells to produce a harmless protein that the COVID virus also has. The immune system recognizes that the protein does not belong there and begins making antibodies as it would do with a natural COVID-19 infection. At the end of the process, the body has learned how to protect itself against future COVID infection. Studies over the past year have shown the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines to be effective in preventing COVID infection in approximately 95% of the population.

From a safety standpoint, the vaccine cannot give a person COVID-19 or cause a person to test positive for COVID because the vaccine has no parts of the actual virus. The possible side effects are similar to other vaccines and if they occur, will usually last only 24 – 72 hours. Possible side effects include pain, swelling and redness at the injection site, muscle soreness, fatigue, low grade fever, and headache.

The COVID-19 vaccine plays an important role in efforts to control the spread of the disease and our return to a more normal lifestyle by achieving herd immunity that will ultimately prevent the spread of the virus. Some experts say that if roughly 70% of the U.S. population receives both doses of the two-dose vaccine as soon as possible, herd immunity could be achieved as early as fall of 2021.

Additional safety measures

While the vaccine is a crucial tool in controlling the spread of COVID-19, standard CDC-recommended safety precautions must still be practiced at this time: wear a mask, wash hands frequently, avoid gathering in groups and practice social distancing.

###

CONTACT BELOW IS FOR MEDIA USE ONLY

For more information about this press release or to schedule an interview, please contact Kathy Bowers at 850.791.5254 or BHCMediaRelations@bhcpns.org.

About Baptist Health Care

Baptist Health Care is a community-owned, not-for-profit health care organization based in northwest Florida that is committed to helping people throughout life's journey. The organization is a proud member of the Mayo Clinic Care Network. A 2003 Malcolm Baldrige recipient, Baptist continuously strives to be a national leader in quality and service. Baptist Health Care includes three hospitals, four medical parks, Andrews Institute for Orthopaedic & Sports Medicine, Lakeview Center and a large network of primary care and specialty physicians. With more than 7,300 employees and employed physicians, Baptist Health Care is the second largest non-governmental employer in northwest Florida.

Baptist Health Care • Baptist Hospital • Gulf Breeze Hospital • Jay Hospital • Lakeview Center • Baptist Medical Park – Nine Mile • Baptist Medical Park – Navarre • Baptist Medical Park – Pace • Baptist Medical Park – Airport • Andrews Institute • Baptist Medical Group • Baptist Heart & Vascular Institute • Cardiology Consultants • Baptist Health Care Foundation