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## **COVID-19 Vaccination: Educating Patients on Vaccine Availability and Distribution Plans in Lewiston, ME**

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### **Recommended Citation**

MacLean, Erick, "COVID-19 Vaccination: Educating Patients on Vaccine Availability and Distribution Plans in Lewiston, ME" (2021). *Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects*. 637.

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# COVID-19 Vaccination: Educating Patients on Vaccine Availability and Distribution Plans in Lewiston, Maine

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Family Medicine Clerkship  
January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
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The University of Vermont  
LARNER COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

# Problem Identification / Description of Need

- December 2020: FDA issued emergency use authorizations (EUAs) for the Pfizer/BioNTech (Dec 11<sup>th</sup>) and the Moderna (Dec 18<sup>th</sup>) COVID-19 vaccines<sup>1,2</sup>
- Abundance of misinformation surrounding COVID-19 on the internet, particularly social media
- Many patients at the Central Maine Medical Center Family Medicine Residency have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines
- Need for accurate, consistent information to educate the community about COVID-19 vaccines and increase vaccine confidence



# Public Health Cost / Unique Considerations in Host Community

- **Cumulative COVID-19 Case Data**<sup>3</sup> (accessed 01/10/2021)
  - Statewide (Maine)
    - 29,298 cases of COVID-19 (24,430 confirmed, 4,868 probable)
    - 432 deaths from COVID-19
  - Androscoggin County (home to Lewiston)
    - 3,173 cases of COVID-19 (2,549 confirmed, 624 probable)
    - 47 deaths from COVID-19
- **COVID-19 Vaccination Data**<sup>4</sup> (accessed 01/10/2021)
  - 54,557 cumulative vaccinations statewide (48,937 first doses; 5,620 second doses)
  - As of Jan 10th, Maine remains in Phase 1a of vaccine distribution (healthcare workers and residents of long-term care facilities)
- **Androscoggin County**
  - Many patients considered “high risk” for COVID-19 vaccine priority according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention priority recommendations
  - For example, data from 2017 suggest that 10.4% of adults aged 20+ in Androscoggin county have a diagnosis of diabetes<sup>5</sup>



# Community Perspective

## Betty St. Hilaire, Social Worker

- “There is no shortage of information about the [COVID] vaccines out there, but it can be really confusing, especially for patients with low health literacy.”
- Highlighted the importance of communicating accurate information about the COVID vaccines to the community
- Emphasized that some individuals in the community have limited access to the internet, which can make it difficult to get updated information about the COVID-19 vaccines



# Community Perspective

## Ben Landry, PharmD

- “There is a great deal of anxiety around COVID in general. This isn’t helped by mis-information, which can often be found on social media.”
- Many individuals have concerns about the safety of the vaccines and the potential for side effects
- Emphasized the value of patient education and importance of addressing safety concerns with accurate information that can be easily understood



# Intervention and Methodology

- Developed a two-page, printable, easy-to-read information sheet on the COVID-19 vaccines to assist with community education
  - Includes information on vaccine effectiveness, frequently asked questions, and vaccine distribution plans in Maine
- Distributed the information sheet to providers at the Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC) Family Medicine Residency Clinic
- Submitted the information sheet to CMMC Human Resources for approval prior to making it available to patients



# Results

- Information sheet was well-received by providers at CMMC Family Medicine Residency, who viewed it as a helpful tool to help with patient education

## COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet

Updated: 01/01/2021

### What Vaccines are Available?

#### Pfizer-BioNTech

On Dec. 11, the FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for use in individuals 16 years and older. The vaccine is given in 2 doses, with the second dose given 21 days after the initial dose.

#### Moderna

On Dec. 18, the FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine for use in individuals 18 years and older. The vaccine is given in 2 doses, with the second dose given 28 days after the initial dose.

### How Effective are the Vaccines?

#### Pfizer-BioNTech

Provides 95% protection against symptomatic Covid-19 infection with two doses of the vaccine.

#### Moderna

Provides 94.5% protection against symptomatic Covid-19 infection with two doses of the vaccine.



### When Will I Get the Vaccine?

#### Maine Distribution Plans

It will take months for enough vaccine to be produced for everyone, so Maine is following vaccine priority recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As vaccine supply becomes more available, these recommendations may change.

#### Vaccine Priority Phases

##### Phase 1

**1a:** Health care workers and residents of long-term care facilities

**1b:** People age 75 and older and frontline essential workers

**1c:** People ages 65-74, people ages 16-64 with high-risk medical conditions, and other essential workers

##### Phase 2

All people ages 16 and older who are not in Phase 1. During this phase, the vaccine will become available to the general public.

Ask your healthcare provider about any questions or concerns.

More information can be found at: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines>

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## COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet

Updated: 01/01/2021

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### How do we know the vaccines are safe?

- The COVID-19 vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. Many people of different ages, races, and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions were recruited to participate in these trials.

#### How is the vaccine given?

- Both the Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine and the Moderna Vaccine involve two injections in the arm.

#### What are the side effects of the vaccines?

- Side effects may include injection site pain, swelling, and redness; tiredness; headache; muscle pain; chills; fever; joint pain; nausea; feeling unwell; and swollen lymph nodes. There is a very small risk of a severe allergic reaction, which may include difficulty breathing, swelling of the face and throat, fast heartbeat, rash all over the body, dizziness, and weakness.

#### How long will protection from COVID-19 last?

- At this time, we do not know how long the vaccines provide protection from COVID-19 infection. More information will become available in the months ahead.

#### Do the vaccines prevent me from passing the virus to others?

- At this time, we do not know if the vaccines protect people from carrying the virus without symptoms and passing the virus to unvaccinated people. For this reason, it is recommended to continue wearing masks and social distancing after you receive the vaccine.

#### Should I get the vaccine if I am pregnant or breastfeeding?

- The current vaccines have not been tested in pregnant women. However, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists recommends the COVID-19 vaccines should be offered to pregnant individuals who meet criteria for vaccination. In addition, they recommend that COVID-19 vaccines should be offered to individuals who are breastfeeding, if they meet criteria. However, it is recommended that all individuals discuss the risks and benefits with their healthcare provider.

#### What medical conditions are considered high-risk for vaccine priority?

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) considers the following conditions to be high-risk: pregnancy, cancer, chronic kidney disease, COPD, heart conditions, immunocompromised state, obesity, sickle cell disease, smoking, and type 2 diabetes mellitus.

#### Who is considered a "frontline essential worker" for vaccine priority?

- The CDC considers the following professions as frontline essential workers: first responders, people working in the education/daycare sector, food and agriculture workers, manufacturing workers, corrections workers, Postal Service workers, public transit workers, and grocery store workers.

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# Evaluation of Effectiveness and Limitations

- Evaluation of Effectiveness
  - Effectiveness may be assessed via a survey given to patients at the CMMC Family Medicine Residency Clinic, asking about their knowledge of the COVID-19 vaccines and the plans distribute the vaccine in Maine
    - May consider assessing knowledge before and after visits, or comparing knowledge between patients at the residency clinic and others in the community
  - May assess if providers and patients find the information sheet helpful or if it contributes to confusion and anxiety surrounding COVID-19
- Limitations
  - Provider buy-in
  - Potential for vaccine information and distribution plans to change as we continue our efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic



# Recommendations for Future Interventions

- COVID-19 vaccine information is constantly being updated as we learn more about the vaccines. Future projects could address changes in COVID-19 vaccine information to ensure patients and providers have the most up-to-date guidance.
- Coordinate with other departments within CMMC network and other community partners to educate a larger proportion of the community about the COVID-19 vaccines

# References

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