

# Frontline News

1199 MEMBERS ON THE FRONT LINES OF THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

## A MESSAGE FROM DR. RAFAEL LANTIGUA

I recently received the COVID-19 vaccine. I got vaccinated because I believe in science and because of my patients and my community. The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and is the result of groundbreaking research and tireless work of scientists. I encourage you to get vaccinated. As health workers, we have been at the forefront of this pandemic. We are the ones who have confronted this disease. We have not only experienced the suffering of others, but we have also seen how many of our co-workers and loved ones have suffered from the disease. Many have passed away. Now, we have the solution in these vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccine is the antidote for this horrific pandemic, and it gives us hope that we can return to normal and once again be together with family, friends, and our community. Please, let's get vaccinated and let's leave COVID-19 behind. It is imperative that we do so not only to protect ourselves and our families but also those we serve. The only way that we're really going to come back, to hug each other, to kiss each other, to remove our masks, to be close to each other again is through herd immunity. Then we can be the society we want to be—to go out without any problems, to be together, and to be a healthy country again. I got vaccinated. And so should you!



*Dr. Rafael Lantigua is an Internal Medicine physician at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Irving Medical Center, a community health advocate, and a longtime ally of 1199SEIU*



## MEMBER VOICES

“I was hospitalized with the virus and out of work for a month and a half. It was terrible. It's better to take a leap of faith, get vaccinated, and protect yourself. You never know when you will get the virus or what will happen to you as a result.”

MANNY ST. HILAIRE, CAT TECH, FLORIDA MEDICAL CENTER

## NEW YORK VOWS TO IMPROVE VACCINATION FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that the state needs to do better vaccinating people of color. The state released new data on hospital workers who have taken at least the first shot of the COVID-19 vaccine, showing workers of color are being vaccinated at lower rates.

New statewide data of hospital workers showed 63% of vaccine recipients were white (70% of eligible population); 10% of vaccine recipients were African American (17% of eligible population); 10% of vaccine recipients were Hispanic or Latino (8% of eligible population); and 16% of vaccine recipients were Asian (11% of eligible population). Gov. Cuomo continues to raise the issue that people of color suffered greater harm from COVID-19 and people of color need to be priority for the vaccine.

## COVID-19 FAQs / LINKS / INFO

FAQs compiled and updated regularly by 1199's Benefit Fund and the first place to go for questions about the Covid-19 vaccine, where to get it, and other concerns.

<https://1199seiu.org/covid19vaccineresources>

**Other questions about the COVID-19 vaccine?**  
Email [VaccineQuestions@1199.org](mailto:VaccineQuestions@1199.org)

## ANOTHER REASON TO GET VACCINATED: NEW CORONAVIRUS STRAINS ARE EMERGING

A handful of new strains of the coronavirus have emerged overseas that have given scientists some cause for concern. Some variants that have been identified in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil appear to be more transmissible than previous strains but not necessarily more deadly. Dr. Anthony Fauci, President Biden's Chief Medical Advisor, said a dip in the vaccines' effectiveness would be “all the more reason why we should be vaccinating as many people as you possibly can.” Mutations occur when the virus spreads and replicates itself, which can be suppressed if enough people are inoculated against the disease to build herd immunity, he explained.

## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

**Q:** *Will I still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing once the COVID-19 vaccine is available, and once I get the vaccine?*

**A:** Yes. We know that the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are 94 to 95 percent effective, and it is possible that the vaccine will protect you from getting very sick with the virus, but it will not prevent you from spreading the virus to other people. Currently, there is also no data that shows how long vaccine protection can last. Protection may wane over time, and you may be susceptible again. We are learning more, but at present we all need to wear masks and practice social distancing until a large proportion of the population is vaccinated and we are sure the vaccine provides long-term protection.