

Frontline News

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



Jacynth Stewart is a member of 1199's Retiree Division Executive Board. She was a dietary worker at Mount Sinai Beth Israel Medical Center in NYC for 39 years.

BY GETTING VACCINATED, WE CARE FOR OURSELVES AND EACH OTHER

Dear Sisters and Brothers, I am happy to report that I will be receiving my second dose of the Pfizer vaccine on Thursday, Feb. 25 at Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center in Brooklyn. I'm relieved and grateful that I will be protected from COVID-19. It has been very painful to watch so many seniors (and their families) in our communities be affected by this deadly virus. What's as concerning is the number of seniors and retired people I've spoken with who don't want to take the vaccine. They have been frightened by lies and misinformation. This misinformation is dangerous and can cost lives. I encourage you to learn as much as you can from doctors and reputable sources like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Dr. Anthony Fauci. And then get vaccinated. In my spare time, I volunteer with my church's health ministry. We're doing a lot of events to help combat the spread of bad information around COVID-19 vaccines. I do this because I was a health-care worker for 39 years and I'm now a member of our Retiree Division's Executive Board. I feel a responsibility to ensure that everyone—especially our retirees and seniors—has the best and most accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines. As Union members, we need to look out for one another. Right now, there's no better way to do that than to get vaccinated and encourage others to do so as well.

BEWARE OF MISINFORMATION ABOUT VACCINES

Just as with the Presidential election and many other hot topics, there are people using social media to sow confusion and doubt about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines.

One of the biggest myths about the vaccines is they can cause infertility among women. The on-line rumor says that the shot could cause the immune system to attack the placenta, potentially leading to miscarriage and infertility. This rumor has no basis in fact and is dangerous because so many healthcare workers are younger women who may have concerns about infertility. Researchers have conducted tests and according to Yale School of Medicine immunologist Akiko Iwasaki there is no scientific ground for the infertility idea. "It is nonsense," says Iwasaki.

This is a reminder that social media sites are not reliable sources for medical information. For the latest guidance online around COVID-19 protocols and vaccine information, visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html> or The World Health Organization at <https://www.who.int/>

HALF OF NEW YORK NURSING HOME WORKERS VACCINATED

According to data released by the Biden administration, as of this week, 50 percent of New York State nursing home workers have taken at least their first COVID-19 vaccination. The vaccination rate varies, with New York's Capital Region around Albany having the highest rate—with over 58 percent of staff taking at least their first shot. New York City is lagging with 46 percent taking the vaccine. Brooklyn (Kings County) is among the lowest for staff vaccination rates. Among residents, vaccination rates are significantly higher, with over 72 percent have taken at least the first dose, and some counties at over 90 percent. Many nursing home workers have expressed some skepticism about the vaccine and are taking a "wait and see" approach. Nationally, we are seeing more staff take the vaccine during the second and third rounds. With all that nursing home workers have faced over the past 12 months it is amazing that over half the staff have already taken at least their first shot. We need to keep encouraging vaccinations among our co-workers and communities, so we can protect ourselves, our families, and our residents.

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Q: *Is it safe for me to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I would like to have a baby one day?*

A: **Yes.** People who want to get pregnant in the future may receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Based on current knowledge, experts believe that COVID-19 vaccines are unlikely to pose a risk to a person trying to become pregnant in the short or long term. Scientists study every vaccine carefully for side effects immediately and for years afterward. The COVID-19 vaccines are being studied carefully now and will continue to be studied for many years, similar to other vaccines. The COVID-19 vaccine, like other vaccines, works by training our bodies to develop antibodies to fight against the virus that causes COVID-19, to prevent future illness. There is currently no evidence that antibodies formed from COVID-19 vaccination cause any problems with pregnancy, including the development of the placenta. In addition, there is no evidence suggesting that fertility problems are a side effect of ANY vaccine. People who are trying to become pregnant now or who plan to try in the future may receive the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available to them.

