

Jacob Barak, Ph.D., MBA, President and CEO

John McMasters, MA, BS, Executive Assistant



NEWS

*Special Edition Issue-The Newsletter of the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health*

## **Vaccination Awareness**

A message from Jacob Barak, CEO,

I hope you and your family are healthy and safe. In this newsletter, I will be sharing with you my thoughts on the topic of COVID vaccination.

I have always believed that we, as a society, have an obligation to provide all people with shelter, food, health care, and education. We have all joined in PCMH's vision with a commitment to help individuals and their communities achieve a better life. The COVID virus has been, and still is, threatening the health and economic well-being of our communities. My expectation is that we approach the COVID virus with the same intention, care, and concern, that we approach our consumers.

When there was just a trickle of vaccines available, hesitancy didn't matter as much because plenty of people were clamoring for the scarce shots. However, now that the supply is ramping up, the challenge is to overcome fear, distrust, and outright antagonism to the new vaccines. The path to save lives, slow the emergence of new virus variants, end the stress on the health care system, and restore the economy is through vaccination. If a critical mass of people don't accept Covid-19 vaccines, the country and our NYC neighborhoods won't achieve "herd immunity."

Recent research from Pfizer has shown that where most of the adults have been vaccinated, an open economic society and reduction in hospitalizations (and death) were directly correlated to the total population that received the vaccine. The study and research indicated the vaccinated group fared far better than their unvaccinated peers. After the second and final dose, they were 94% less likely to get sick and 87% less likely to be hospitalized.

If we all joined PCMH to help others, now is the time to get vaccinated – both for ourselves and our fellow human beings. Recent data about the low rate of COVID vaccination among our employees is a significant concern. Low vaccination rates will prevent the recovery and restored health, needed in our communities. We have lost too many lives to the COVID virus, including two of our own PCMH Scatter Site tenants this past week. Our role is to stop the virus from spreading while protecting the physical and mental well-being of ourselves, our co-workers, our friends and family, and the city around us. Isn't helping others the reason we work at PCMH?

Thank you,

**Jacob Barak | CEO**

## Let's Hear from Our Staff

PCMH recognizes that the decision to get vaccinated may be challenging for some. We spoke with your colleagues, co-workers, and bosses about their personal experiences and we are confident that many of you can relate.

### Yes, We Had Reservations About Getting Vaccinated

"[I] absolutely had reservations; thought they would be installing a chip or something in us; or just testing us like with the Tuskegee airmen and something that would be a disaster or in the least a legal commercial in the future. You know the one: "If you took the Covid-19 vaccination in 2021; you may be entitled to monetary compensation as you will now have cancer of everything..." Crazy."

"I read the peer-reviewed clinical trial results for all of the available vaccines and had no concerns about safety based on the peer reviewed data. I was a bit anxious about being amongst a lot of people who may or may not be wearing masks and social distancing. But on the day of the shots the sites handled everything safely and quickly."

"I had reservations about the vaccine because I heard things like, "the vaccine was not tested on humans or animals so there was no way of being certain it will work for everyone or the effects it will have".

"My initial reservation was wondering if it was safe and 'will the needle hurt' was a big concern for me. I watched a video of a nurse explaining it and she took the shot as well it gave me comfort knowing the facts."

"I was hesitant that it might do more harm than good and was scared"

"I didn't want to be a test dummy, the needle on TV was big"

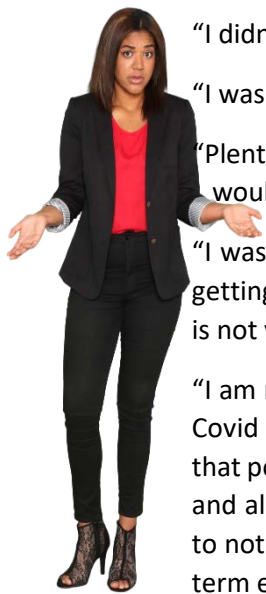
"I was also scared of the needle and how much it would hurt. It felt like a regular shot, small pinch."

"Plenty of reservations but mostly the fear of getting sick, experiencing death prematurely, and how this would affect me long term (meaning 5 years from now)."

"I was hesitant as I was breastfeeding my newborn but after consulting with my doctor I was informed getting vaccinated could benefit my child as he would get some antibodies from breast milk. As the vaccine is not yet approved for kids, I was happy to potentially share antibodies with my newborn."

"I am not a fan of vaccines at all in general so I initially had no plans of getting it (also because I thought Covid "would die down quickly"). Then I observed how severe it became and how quick it spread and at that point I considered the vaccine. I was offered the opportunity then declined. I still had many questions and also I took into consideration the thoughts of those opposed to it and ultimately made my decision to not get it off of that. I also didn't like the fact of taking a rush vaccine and was afraid of potential long term effects."

"I was terrified initially because I am afraid of needles and I also have heard some very disparaging



things about the possible effects of the vaccine.”

### **What Was Your Vaccine Experience?**

“It was no issues except my arm hurt like heck for about 5 days”

“The shots were done quickly – not really painful (Moderna). After the 1st shot I had the normal achy arm at the site of the injection which went away in 24 hours. The 2nd time I had no pain, but a mild rash around the injection site that went away in a few hours. No other symptoms or after effects since getting the 2nd shot.”

“Taking the shot was quick and painless. I asked the nurse if I can record it and for both of the shots it just left me feeling tired.”

“I got vaccinated in February. It was painless”

“It was painless, quick and nurse gave me a piece of candy.”

“It was quick and easy, I had almost no side effects except for a very sore arm, but there are worse things.”

“I asked when I was going to be injected, only to learn that I already had been. Very quick and painless.”

“I was nervous because I hate needles but as I was complaining to the nurse about hating needles she had already administered the shot. My second shot I had a bad reaction to (body pain) but it only lasted a few hours.”

“My experience was actually fine. I did not get sick and only experienced a sore arm which was not an immediate response but also not a lasting response.”

“the process was relatively quick. I had no symptoms after the first shot except soreness at the injection site similar to the flu shot. 24 hours post shot #2 I experienced a slight headache as well as body aches. I took ibuprofen and the symptoms went away.”

### **Why We Said Yes To Vaccination**

“I am an essential worker who goes into work each day to care / work for a vulnerable population who do not take very good care of themselves. I have a family at home whom I could potentially kill if I were infected with the virus and ended up giving it to one of them. I have underlying medical issues that make me very susceptible to potentially being very ill if I do catch it. Finally, I have more years behind me than in front of me....I want to enjoy them worry free.”

“I had read the published clinical trial data, consulted with my own Dr., and decided that the peace of mind that would be offered by getting fully vaccinated outweighed any qualms I might have. It was a good decision.”

“My decision to get the vaccine was that even the disparaging comments had it's what ifs and I figured if there was uncertainty on both sides, I'd rather take my chances with the side that offered me protection from this horrific virus that has cost so many their lives.”



“I decided to say yes because I take pride in taking care of my health and if this vaccine was intended to keep me safe and alive then it was a no brainer plus my wife reinforced that it was the right thing to do as well and it did not matter which vaccine to take. I thought Pfizer was better because it is a well-known brand but Moderna was available and the effectiveness was about the same storing the vaccine was the only difference.”

“but after so many people got it I decided it was TIME!!”

“I got vaccinated in February. It was painless. I was eager to get vaccinated to protect my family, my elderly friends and everyone who works with me. All the research I did proved that the vaccine was tried on hundreds of thousands of people since summer of 2020 and was extremely safe and effective in protecting everyone against getting severely sick or dying. Everyone in my family both adults and children got vaccinated including all who wish to have children (making me a grandfather again...) I wish everyone will get it and we shall all be back to normal.”

“I was tired of playing Russian Roulette with my life each and every day on public transportation, public spaces, work, etc.. The guessing game each day was causing me severe anxiety. Oh and my mom said I couldn’t visit my grandmother if I didn’t and I sure missed my grannies cooking.”

“I wanted to protect myself and my family, particularly my parents who are older and have underlying medical conditions. I also wanted to travel again! A few weeks after I got vaccinated I took a wonderful vacation overseas and felt SO confident and safe knowing I got vaccinated.”

“It wasn’t much of a decision for me. In addition to considering myself, I strongly believe that vaccination serves a greater good. The possibility or potential that I could place someone else’s life at risk is not something that I am comfortable with.”

“I said yes after doing my own research on the ingredients in the vaccine.”

“Both my parents received it. My dad has many underlying health conditions and had 0 side effects. My mother received dose 1 and encouraged me to get it because I take public transportation daily in my travels to the office. Lastly my cousin is a surgical technician for Memorial Sloan Kettering and is a believer in science and provided me with lots of education. While I had intentions of getting it I didn’t have any intentions now but family testimonial allowed me to have a change of heart. My sister just received dose 1 yesterday and I am super happy for her as she has bad asthma.”

“to protect myself, my family, and those I come in contact with.”

## **Did You Hear The News?**

### **Educational materials:**

- [What New Yorkers Need to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines FAQ](#): Questions & Answers from the NYC Health Department
- [The Conversation: Between Us, About Us](#): Black health care professionals support conversations and provide information about the COVID-19 vaccines.



- OMH's vaccination videos can be found here: [https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLr56qcghZ6Er\\_ZA8BCeSxBPBG\\_ZQggcN6](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLr56qcghZ6Er_ZA8BCeSxBPBG_ZQggcN6)
- CDC Covid Vaccine Myths and Facts <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>
- After Vaccination: Learn important information for after you get the vaccine, including tips for before you leave the vaccination site and what to do if you feel side effects:
  - [What You Need to Know After Getting Your Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
  - [What You Need to Know After Getting Your Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
  - [What You Need to Know After Getting Your Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

#### **Making an appointment:**

- For more on eligibility visit [COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility](#)
- Vaccination site locations for eligible New Yorkers: <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>
- To make an appointment at a NYC Health Department or NYC Health + Hospitals vaccination site, call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4629).
- OMH Vaccination Sites O-LOV Vaccination Program for providers and consumers. Contact your supervisor to request the link.

#### **Still have questions or concerns?**

The following PCMH team members are available to speak with staff about vaccination:

- Cara Turner, Executive Vice President: **Ext. 456**
- Anisa Kline, Director of Training and Staff Development: **Ext. 224**

**ANY PROTECTION IS BETTER THAN  
NO PROTECTION**