



Dec. 13, 2020

Dear UMB and UMMS Community:

We are writing today with an important announcement - one that we have all been looking forward to for many months.

On Friday, Dec. 11, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued the [first emergency use authorization for a vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19](#). This authorization was granted to the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, which may now be distributed and used in the United States.

Furthermore, on Saturday, Dec. 12, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to join the FDA in recommending the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use in the United States.

With the approval of these two agencies - combined with immunization experts from around the world and here at the University of Maryland School of Medicine - the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) have determined it is time to begin our own unified vaccination effort.

This week, UMB and UMMS - as well as the state of Maryland and many other health systems across the country - will proceed with allocation of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine according to the [Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine](#) - developed by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine - as well as ACIP's [Ethical Principles for Allocating Initial Supplies of COVID-19 Vaccine](#). These guidelines will ensure that the vaccine is allocated ethically across all populations while still in limited supply.

As a community of health care professionals, students, faculty, and other essential workers, our academic health system soon will be provided with an allocation of vaccine to ensure that those at highest risk are vaccinated in accordance with the frameworks described to guide an equitable allocation of vaccine administration.

When offered the vaccine, all UMB faculty, staff, and students, as well as UMMS employees and medical staff, will have the option to receive it or not. We will not be making vaccination mandatory at this time. However, our hope is that - as a science-minded community - you will review the facts and come to the determination on your own that receiving the vaccine is safe and ultimately the only way to achieve protection for our patients and each other.

We will share additional resources and details regarding distribution efforts at our respective institutions within the coming days. In the meantime, please take a moment to recognize the importance of this exciting milestone.

Thank you for all you continue to do to keep our communities safe. We look forward to working with you to end COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS

President

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