



COVID-19 COMMUNICATION



Protecting patients and ourselves from COVID-19

A message to CMH team members from Kris Chaisson, MS, BSN, RN, CCRN, Incident Commander, Vice President of Nursing and Patient Care Services

The coronavirus pandemic is not yet over. To end it, we need to remain vigilant and take measures to protect our patients, our families and ourselves.

We continue to strongly encourage vaccination. The authorized vaccines provide significant protection against serious illness and hospitalization due to COVID-19. **Nearly all COVID deaths in the U.S. are now among unvaccinated people**, and the death count could be close to zero if everyone eligible received the vaccine. Being vaccinated is also the best way to protect against the delta variant that could **threaten the progress Maine has made against the pandemic**.

You have likely seen in the news that the State of Maine is collecting information on the employee vaccination rates at healthcare and long-term care facilities. The rates across Central Maine Healthcare vary widely and we are concerned about the low rates in some areas of our health system – and the public has also voiced concerns. You can see the data at [Maine Health Care Worker COVID-19 Vaccination Dashboard](#).

To help us report accurate information, please let us know if you have been vaccinated outside of CMH. Email a photo of your vaccination card to employeehealthcmhc@cmhc.org with **vaccination card** in the subject line. Thank you for your help in this area.

Team members may still receive vaccine at our high-volume site at the Auburn Mall. Walk-in vaccination is available from 8 a.m.- 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays (though not on July 3 due to the holiday weekend). Please let the staff know that you are a CMH team member.

It's natural to have questions about vaccination and we're happy to talk to you or your team. Please reach out by emailing CMHCcommunications@cmhc.org. There's also great information available at the website getvaccineanswers.org.

While masking and other guidelines have been relaxed for the general public, please remember that our protocols have not changed. As healthcare workers, we follow protocols that are stricter than those for the general community:

- Every CMH team member must screen for symptoms upon entry
- Every CMH team member must wear a procedural mask
- Every CMH team member WHO ENCOUNTERS PATIENTS must wear eye protection AROUND patients
- Every CMH team member must remain at least 6 feet apart from others when in meetings or when eating/drinking, which is allowed ONLY IN DESIGNATED AREAS

These are CMH policies and are non-negotiable. Team members who fail to follow these policies will be required to undergo performance management.

Our guidelines must be more stringent because we often do not know whether patients have been vaccinated when they first arrive and because we care for many highly immunocompromised patients who may remain vulnerable to COVID-19 even after vaccination.

The guidelines for visitors to CMH facilities also remain the same and must be strictly followed. This [link](#) details restrictions for patients and visitors and how they apply to various departments system-wide. Please familiarize yourself with the policies if you have not already.

Thank you for your attention to these issues. They make all the difference for the people who entrust us with their care. We have come so far and, together, we can see this to the end.

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