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THE IMPORTANCE OF SARS-CO-V-2 VACCINATION TO PREVENT COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT IN THE PULMONARY FIBROSIS COMMUNITY

December 28, 2020

To members of the Pulmonary Fibrosis Community,

SARS-Co-V-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has impacted the lives of almost everyone across the globe in one way or another. It is estimated that over 77 million people across the world have been infected with SARS-Co-V-2, with **over 19 million cases in the United States**. The catastrophic impact is evident with over 300,000 deaths in the United States from COVID-19, disproportionately affecting those with underlying medical respiratory conditions such as pulmonary fibrosis, as well as older Americans.

The key strategies of prevention have been emphasized and are available on the **PFF COVID-19 Resources page**. They include physical distancing, appropriate hygiene with hand washing, and face covering to limit the spread of the disease and prevent infection. These measures are clearly effective in limiting the spread of COVID-19, as the virus is spread by airborne particles (aerosols), which can be easily inhaled or ingested in the absence of safe practices.

To complement these safe practices, two vaccines have been approved for **Emergency Use Authorization** by the FDA and other regulatory agencies across the world.^{1,2} Achieving this in less than one year was an extraordinary effort that built on groundbreaking scientific work from the prior ten years. This allowed the efficient and rigorous conduct of clinical trials, in which these vaccines were demonstrated to be safe and over 94% effective in preventing COVID-19 illness.³ Combined with safe practices, vaccination with either of these vaccines will provide a pathway for a safe return to a more normal life over the coming months.

In accordance with the Recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention⁴, the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation strongly encourages vaccination for COVID-19 when the vaccine becomes available, as the benefits far outweigh the risks. The two

authorized vaccines have been demonstrated to be safe and extremely effective in preventing COVID-19 and/or limiting the development of severe COVID-19.

Following vaccination, individuals should continue to adhere to safe practices, including the use of face coverings, hand washing, and physical distancing until the number of people infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the community is significantly reduced. To find regional information regarding when and how to get vaccinations, and to ensure that you are not part of the limited population for whom vaccination is not recommended at this time, we encourage you to reach out to your primary care physician and pulmonologist. Vaccine distribution is being coordinated by local and state departments of health. While the vaccine is currently being directed to health care providers and the elderly, supplies are expected to increase over the next several months at which time broader vaccination will begin.

As new information is available, we will update the [COVID-19 Resources](#) page and encourage you to visit the site regularly. Patients, relatives, advocacy experts, industry, physicians, researchers, and federal agencies have all contributed to the tremendous successes in development of the two available vaccines. The entire PF community, as well as all Americans, should avail themselves of the protection afforded by vaccination, so we can continue our work as *we imagine a world without PF*.

On behalf of the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation Medical & Scientific Advisory Committee,



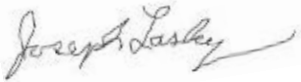
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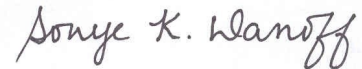
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- 3 Polack, F. P. et al. Safety and Efficacy of the BNT162b2 mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine. The New England Journal of Medicine, doi:10.1056/NEJMoa2034577 (2020).
- 4 Dooling, K. et al. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' Interim Recommendation for Allocating Initial Supplies of COVID-19 Vaccine - United States, 2020. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 69, 1857-1859, doi:10.15585/mmwr.