



**TO: ALL CONCERNED**

**DATE: February 4, 2021**

**RE: Town Hall Q & A**

The Town Hall today was broken up into 2 segments due the amount of material to cover.

**COVID Vaccine Questions with Dr. Longnecker:**

\*Will I get sick after the injection?

Common side effects include pain and swelling at the injection site. Recipients may also have generalized or systemic symptoms such as fever, chills, fatigue and headaches. These are temporary and will resolve in a few days. Many will have little to no symptoms.

\*Will this be putting COVID in my body?

No, none of the available vaccines contain the live virus. This means the vaccine CANNOT make you sick with COVID-19

\*Why do I need two shots? What if I only get one?

The first dose helps the immune system create a response against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. The second dose further boosts the immune response to ensure long-term protection.

Research shows that the vaccines are only 50% effective 10 days or so after the first shot, but this immunity is likely to wane. Getting a second shot is nearly 95% effective several days after the second, and appears to provide much longer immunity.

\*How long will the immunity last?

At this time, it is unknown how long the immunity will last, but studies are encouraging. There is also no doubt though that SOME immunity will remain and could prevent severe illness in the future.

\*Is it effective on the variant strains?

Most recent reports do show overlapping immunity with variant strains being discovered. Certainly, your immunity to any variant strain will be MUCH higher if you get a vaccine vs not getting one

\*The roll out was very quick, is it safe? Has it been fully tested?

In public health emergencies, such as a pandemic, the development process may be atypical. For example, as demonstrated by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. government has coalesced government agencies, international counterparts, academia, nonprofit organizations and pharmaceutical companies to develop a coordinated strategy for prioritizing and speeding development of the most promising vaccines. In addition, the federal government has made investments in the necessary manufacturing capacity at its own risk, giving companies confidence that they can invest aggressively in development and allowing faster distribution of an eventual vaccine. However, efforts to speed vaccine development to address the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have not sacrificed scientific standards, integrity of the vaccine review process, or safety.

Recognizing the urgent need for safe and effective vaccines, FDA is utilizing its various authorities and expertise to facilitate the expeditious development and availability of vaccines that have met the agency's rigorous and science-based standards for quality, safety, and effectiveness. Early in a public health crisis, FDA provides clear communication to the pharmaceutical industry pertaining to the scientific data and information needed to ensure development of vaccines and works quickly to provide advice on their proposed development plans and assessment of the data that are generated.

\*Do I still need to wear a mask or be quarantined if I received the injection?

Yes. Not enough information is currently available to say if or when CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide in real-world conditions before making that decision. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision. We also don't yet know whether getting a COVID-19 vaccine will prevent you from spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 to other people, even if you don't get sick yourself.

\*If I get a fever after the injection will I be quarantined for 14 days?

Given that we are in a very COVID rich environment, any fever should be treated as possible COVID, but these issues will be taken on a case by case scenario as negative testing following a fever which occurs after a vaccine injection may not have to complete a full quarantine.

When will the vaccine be available and which product will we be receiving?  
I know the DOC is working hard to obtain vaccines and make them available to inmates and staff ASAP. At this time, I am unsure of a timeline

\*If 75% of the population gets the vaccine, can we eliminate cohorts and go back to normal?

Experts do not yet know what percentage of people would need to get vaccinated to achieve herd immunity to COVID-19. Herd immunity means that enough people in a community are protected from getting a disease because they've already had the disease or they've been vaccinated. Herd immunity makes it hard for the disease to spread from person to person, and it even protects those who cannot be vaccinated, like newborns. The percentage of people who need to have protection in order to achieve herd immunity varies by disease. CDC and other experts are studying herd immunity and will provide more information as it is available. Furthermore, being in an enclosed, highly populated environment such as a prison or a college dorm changes the application of herd immunity.

The questions received in the last week through inmate requests are as follows:

1. Issues with Channel 60.

I thank the inmate that told me to check into this as there was in fact an issue and we believe that it has been corrected.

2. Why aren't the foggers used in all cells?

As we continue to learn about this virus in the world, the one thing we have determined is that the EnvirX and PDC45 are both excellent at killing viruses in "touch areas." The foggers have their place, but if the appropriate cleaning is done with these chemicals, it is effective.

3. Why are inmate cleaners not out all day?

There are mixed feelings about the inmate cleaners from both staff and inmates. Some inmates complain that they are out all day and others feel that they should be out all day. We are trying to make responsible decisions daily on how the cleaners are out and at the same time, maintain Cohorting.

4. Why don't staff wear face shields also?

Face shields are usually in addition to masks. The face shields really protect the person wearing them along with a mask. It is to keep droplets from getting in someone's eyes. They are available throughout the facility for staff where appropriate.

5. What about the air vents in our cells and contracting COVID? Why don't you run the purge fans more?

As the world continues to learn more and more about this, there has been no connection that we are aware of to the vents in a facility like this and the Corona virus. Though the idea of letting fresh air in and venting old air out seems to make sense, our purge systems are not created for that. They are actually part of our Fire Suppression System and are to vent smoke out in the event of a fire. They drastically cool the Housing Unit as you all know well and we cannot continually run them without impacting other operations.

6. Why can't we have others sync our Tablets when they are out?

This is another issue that I hear complaints about on both sides. Some inmates have allowed other inmates to sync their Tablets, though it is not authorized and others complain. The current system allows for syncing your Tablet when you come out, even in enhanced quarantines.

7. Video Visits.

After much work, we were finally able to get some video visits started this week on Housing Units. As a reminder; this was put in place because in some facilities east of here, there were Units on enhanced quarantine for months at a time. The Secretary directed that there should be some visitation occurring so we did create the ability to do visits from all Housing Units if that were the case. The issue becomes, as I have explained, if we remove you from visits in the Education Building and place you on the Housing Unit, then all your previously scheduled visit appointments are wiped out. It is not a simple process but we are prepared and are going to do it if appropriate.

8. IRS questions.

After I pursued some more questions with Central Office on all the IRS questions, our direction was that we are not to provide consultation or direction on these but only provide the appropriate forms to the population. Among other things, one of the concerns would be if a staff member with good intentions gave advice or direction that was not to your benefit and it came back on you. Most of the staff here are not experts in tax preparation, so therefore you are really on your own and need to look for decisions outside on how to handle these tax forms.

9. is it safe to mail letters home with the COVID in the facility?

I spoke with Dr. Longnecker as you will see on the video and he felt that it was in fact safe. As with all documents and papers we handle, such as the hundreds of inmate requests I get every week, after handling them **you must wash your hands before doing anything else.** That is the ongoing wisdom on these matters.

Thank you,

Superintendent Clark

MRC/aae