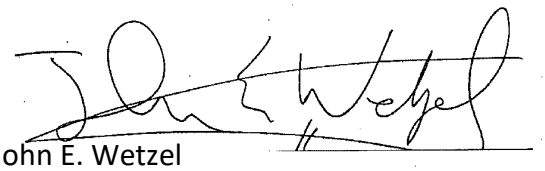
pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

TO: All Inmates



FROM: John E. Wetzel
Secretary of Corrections

DATE: May 3, 2021

SUBJECT: **Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) Vaccine Administration**

Following a thorough safety review, the U.S. FDA and the CDC have determined that the recommended pause regarding the use of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 Vaccine in the U.S. should be lifted and the use of the vaccine should resume. Both agencies have confidence that this vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19 with the benefits greatly outweighing the risk of any side effects. After a thorough review of all data available, the Department is resuming vaccines today, May 3.

Reports of adverse events following the use of the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine suggest an increased risk of thrombosis (formation of blood clots) involving large blood vessels of the abdomen and the veins of the lower extremities (i.e. legs) ***combined with*** thrombocytopenia (low platelet level/low number of platelets in the blood). Platelets help blood clot, by clumping and forming plugs in blood vessel injuries, which stops bleeding. Onset of symptoms may appear approximately one to two weeks after vaccination. Most cases of thrombosis ***with*** thrombocytopenia that were reported after receiving the Janssen Vaccine have occurred in females ages 18 through 49 years of age. Based on current available evidence, the relationship between thrombosis ***with*** thrombocytopenia and the Janssen Vaccine is conceivable, but rare. However, out of an abundance of caution, the PA DOC will continue to monitor reported side effects/adverse reactions, to include ***any*** cases of thrombosis with, or without associated thrombocytopenia.

Prior to vaccine administration, those consenting to receiving the vaccine will have the opportunity to review the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers. The fact sheet has been revised to include information about the risks which have occurred in a very small number of people who received the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine as confirmed by both the FDA and the CDC.

Please alert a staff member, or sign up for Sick call if you experience any side effects or adverse reactions listed below:

1. **Sign Up for Sick Call if you Experience the Following Symptoms:**
    a. Redness, Pain or Swelling at the Injection Site
    b. Feeling Overtired (Fatigue)
    c. Pain in a Muscle or Group of Muscles (myalgia)
    d. Nausea
    e. Fever
2. **Immediately Notify a Staff Member if you Experience the Following Symptoms:**
    a. Shortness of Breath
    b. Chest Pain
    c. Leg Swelling:
        i. Rarely in Both Legs
        ii. Usually in the Calf or Thigh
        iii. Warm and Red/Darkened Skin around the Painful Area
        iv. Swollen Veins that are Hard when Touched
    d. Persistent Abdominal Pain
    e. Neurological Symptoms (Including severe or persistent headaches or blurred vision)
    f. Unusual Bruising Beyond the Site of Vaccination

We understand that the pause may be concerning to those yet to receive the vaccination. It is important to read, understand, and ask any questions you may have prior to receiving the vaccine so that you are comfortable. Remember, receiving the vaccine may protect you from becoming sicker, or even hospitalized if you become infected with the virus, and we strongly encourage everyone eligible to receive the vaccine.

As always, I appreciate your patience over the past year and look forward to a time when we can safely reopen facilities.