



For Immediate Release
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COVID-19 Vaccines Could be the Ultimate Holiday Gift for Those in Senior Living Communities

Franklin Park expects vaccines for staff and residents to allow for more normal social interactions

SAN ANTONIO — The increased discussion and projections for the COVID-19 vaccination to arrive by the end of the year could be the most appreciated and highly-anticipated gift of the 2020 holiday season, especially for those working and living in senior long-term care facilities. Texas leaders are putting nursing home workers, along with other related medical professionals in the first phase of the distribution of the vaccine. The state is also considering adding residents of long-term care facilities, including assisted living and memory care, to the first phase due to changes in the Centers for Disease Control’s (CDC) COVID-19 vaccination recommendations

On December 1, The CDC and Prevention Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP) approved the following recommendation by majority (13-1) vote. When a COVID-19 vaccine is authorized by FDA and recommended by ACIP, vaccination in the initial phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program should be offered to both 1) health care personnel and 2) residents of long-term care facilities. This recommendation has been adopted by the CDC Director.

“The COVID-19 vaccine will allow team members to work in an environment where they are unlikely to be exposed to the virus, and therefore, very unlikely to take the virus home with them, helping keep their own loved ones safe,” Franklin Park Chief Operating Officer Kevin Wilbur said. “While receiving the vaccine will be highly encouraged for all residents and team members, it cannot be an absolute mandate. However, there will be continued restrictions for all who opt out of the vaccine until COVID-19 is considered eradicated.”

Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities make up approximately 1% of the United States’ population, yet account for 39% of the nation’s COVID-19-related deaths. According to Wilbur, throughout the pandemic, the mental health of residents living in long-term facilities has been placed in danger by isolation cause by COVID-19 restrictions.

“Once the majority of residents and team members are vaccinated, we should see dining venues, activities, and visitations begin to be restored to pre-COVID-19 levels, allowing for the social interactions that are very much needed with friends, family and other residents,” Wilbur added. “Restoring the right for family and friends to freely visit their loved ones will have an enormous impact on the happiness and overall health of each resident.”

In time, the vaccine will also help loosen the personal protection equipment rules for staff and residents.

According to the American Senior Housing Association (ASHA), more than 52% of adults who turned age 65 in 2015-2019 will need substantial levels of long-term care services. Franklin Park Senior Living communities are designed to enhance the quality of life for senior residents and caring for them with dignity and respect in a living environment that accentuates each residents’ preferred or needed lifestyle.

Wilbur agrees with many ACIP members who have expressed that the approval and recommendations for the first phase of distribution was driven by the importance of saving lives and preventing the spread of disease. It is a welcomed gift for those disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

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About Franklin Park:

Franklin Park Senior Living communities are Texas-owned and operated. Our properties are designed to provide exceptional retirement living with convenient services and caring compassion for residents over 55 years of age. Franklin Park communities respect and honor the dignity of our residents by offering independent living, assisted living and memory care options based on their needs. To learn more about Franklin Park, please visit www.franklinpark.org.