

# COVID-19 Update



## February 19, 2021

We continue to actively monitor the situation regarding the most recent coronavirus, known as COVID-19. In an attempt to keep you informed about the latest developments, we are sending out regular communication such as this to provide updates and answers to frequently asked questions. **We encourage you to share these updates with all members of your team, especially those who may not have regular access to email.** The latest all-employee communications and updated responses to FAQs can be found at:

<https://www.kindredhealthcare.com/employees/covid-19-updates>.

## Dear Colleagues:

I hope this week's update finds you safe and healthy. As of this week, I am pleased to report that approximately 60% of Kindred team members have received the first dose of the vaccine, and more than 51% of team members have been fully vaccinated.

Many of our teammates across the country have dealt with extreme winter weather conditions in recent days, adding additional challenges to daily life and increasing the sense of isolation and anxiety that has been present throughout much of the pandemic. Just as we take precautions like washing our hands and wearing masks to ensure our physical health, we also need to take steps to focus on our mental health.

As a reminder, all team members have access to our free and confidential **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**, which provides access to licensed professional counselors who can help with stress, anxiety, grief, child and elder care, financial services, and more. EAP services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via phone at **800.854.1446** or online at [www.unum.com/lifebalance](http://www.unum.com/lifebalance). I encourage you to take advantage of the EAP if you or your family need additional support during this challenging time. In addition, if you know anyone who lives alone or may not be able to venture out due to severe weather conditions, I encourage you to reach out and check in with them. Sometimes that simple act of kindness can do wonders for those feeling alone or disconnected.

## Health Experts Urge People of Color to Get Vaccinated

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected people of color in the United States for a variety of reasons, including long-standing social inequities that increase the risk of getting sick or dying from COVID-19. Additionally, there is increased hesitancy among some racial and ethnic groups when it comes to their views on getting the COVID-19 vaccine. A recent [survey](#) by the Kaiser Family Foundation found:

- 35% of Black adults and 42% of Hispanic adults said they would get or already have been vaccinated, compared to 53% of White adults.
- 43% of Black adults and 37% of Hispanic adults said they want to “wait and see” how the vaccine works for other people, compared to 26% of White adults.



- 67% of Black adults and 66% of Hispanic adults feel they do not have enough information about the potential side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine, compared to 51% of White adults.

In response to these trends, the *New York Times* Opinion Section [recently featured an article](#) endorsed by 60 Black members of the National Academy of Medicine urging Black Americans to get vaccinated against the virus that causes COVID-19 when it becomes available to them. An excerpt from the piece states, “We are among [60 Black members](#) of the National Academy of Medicine, the premier health science organization in the United States. Together we are scientists, doctors, nurses, other health care professionals and public health experts. We feel compelled to make the case that all Black Americans should get vaccinated to protect themselves from a pandemic that has disproportionately killed them at a rate [1.5 times](#) as high as white Americans in cases in which race is known — a rate that is most likely very conservative.”

Additionally, in an effort to help share accurate information about the vaccine with Black, Hispanic, Indigenous, and other people of color, the American Lung Association and the Center for Black Health Equity recently published [“Power & Immunity: Information for Protecting Our Bodies & Our Communities.”](#) The guide is designed to provide facts about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine for people of color, and help start a dialogue with an individual’s friends, family members, physicians, pastors, and coworkers.

Please share these resources with your fellow team members so everyone can make an informed decision about getting vaccinated when the time comes.

### **This Week’s #MyWhy #IGotTheShot Moments**

We continue to receive videos and photos from our colleagues throughout Kindred who want to share their perspective on why they decided to roll up their sleeves and receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This week’s #MyWhy #IGotTheShot moments feature Sohail Azeem, CEO of Kindred Hospital Indiana Northwest; Jeannette Davis, Program Director, Physical Rehabilitation, and Lloyd Pinheiro, Rehabilitation Technician, at Kindred Hospital Chattanooga; and Dr. Jerry Meis, Medical Director at Kindred Hospital Havertown (please click on the image or link below to view the video from Dr. Meis):



“The United States has had disproportionately high numbers of COVID-19 deaths in black and brown communities. We will need to do what this pandemic has taught us to do best – have courage to trust our healthcare workers, including physicians and scientists. Let’s get through this and lead by example to do our part to end the pandemic.”

#MyWhy #IGotTheShot



“I got vaccinated to protect myself, my family and my patients, and as a healthcare provider, to set an example for others. I feel that if we step up and show our willingness, we can help others feel more comfortable with being vaccinated.” #MyWhy #IGotTheShot

- Jeannette Davis, Program Director, Physical Rehabilitation, at Kindred Hospital Chattanooga

- *Sohail Azeem, CEO of Kindred Hospital  
Indiana Northwest*

“I got the vaccine to protect myself, my family and my patients.” #MyWhy #IGotTheShot

- *Lloyd Pinheiro, Rehabilitation Technician, at  
Kindred Hospital Chattanooga*



### [Jerry Meis – “Roll up the sleeves, get it done”](#)

We hope these testimonials help you understand the importance of getting vaccinated when you have the opportunity. As a reminder, we invite you to share your vaccine selfies, photos, and videos with us:

- If you are posting to your personal social media account, use the hashtags #MyWhy or #IGotTheShot, and be sure to tag Kindred Healthcare or your respective hospital/facility. This will make it easier for our Social Media team to find your content.
- You also can email your photos or videos to [social@kindred.com](mailto:social@kindred.com). Please be sure to include your name, title, and location/facility.

**Please note that we do need you to fill out a [release form](#) to give us permission to use your image in our internal communications and/or on our official Kindred Healthcare social media channels.** The release can be downloaded [here](#). To submit the release, simply fill it out, take a photo of the completed release, and email it to [social@kindred.com](mailto:social@kindred.com). Also, please don't take photos with patients, families, or visitors; we cannot accept/share photos that feature anyone other than our team members.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit the [CDC's vaccine resource page on their website](#)

### **Healthy Steps Wellness Points Available for Vaccine Activities**

Beginning the week of February 22, team members and their covered spouses/partners who participate in Kindred's HealthySteps Wellness program will have the opportunity to complete two separate activities related to the COVID-19 vaccine to earn Healthy Steps Wellness points.

**Activity #1: Understanding the COVID-19 Vaccine.** Knowing the facts about the safety and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine is important. This activity will allow you to watch a brief video and answer questions about the vaccine for a chance to earn 50 points.

**Activity #2: #IGotTheShot.** As the COVID-19 vaccine becomes more widely available in the coming weeks and months, you can earn 50 points by tracking when you complete one or both doses of your vaccination.

For more information and to participate in these activities, you and your covered spouse/partner can sign into your personal HealthySteps Wellness accounts on your computer or mobile device at [www.healthystepswellness.com](http://www.healthystepswellness.com) (team members may also access the site from [www.KindredforMe.com](http://www.KindredforMe.com) without a separate login).

### **Updated Guidance from the CDC on Quarantine Recommendations for Vaccinated Individuals and Tips to Improve How Your Mask Protects You**

In recent days, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provided updated guidance on several important topics, including quarantine recommendations for individuals who have been fully vaccinated, and tips for improving how your masks protects you.

#### **Quarantine Recommendations for Vaccinated Individuals**

The CDC continues to urge fully vaccinated individuals to follow established safety precautions to protect themselves and others, including wearing a mask, socially distancing, avoiding crowds, washing hands often, etc. However, as of February 10, 2021, the CDC stated that [\*\*fully vaccinated individuals who are exposed to someone with “suspected or confirmed COVID-19” are not required to quarantine\*\*](#) if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated (i.e., more than two weeks following receipt of the second dose/booster in a two-dose series, or more than two weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine).
- Are within three months following receipt of the last dose/booster in the series.
- Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.

Individuals who do not meet all three of the above criteria should continue to follow current quarantine guidance after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Additionally, fully vaccinated individuals who do not quarantine should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure, and seek clinical evaluation if symptoms occur.

#### **Tips to Improve How Your Mask Protects You**

The CDC also provided updated [\*\*guidance on ensuring your mask is optimized to protect you\*\*](#) when wearing a mask in the community. **IMPORTANT NOTE: These tips are for consideration when wearing a mask outside of work in a healthcare facility; please continue to adhere to the established masking policies and procedures when working in a healthcare setting.**

When choosing a mask, consider how well it fits, how well it filters the air, and how many layers it has.

- Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face. Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask.
- Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out. A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets from getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick.
- Add layers of material by using a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric, or wear a disposable mask underneath a cloth mask (the second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against your face. ***Please note this does not apply to healthcare personnel working in a healthcare setting; please***



***continue adhering to the established masking policies and procedures when working in a healthcare setting.)***

- DO NOT combine two disposable masks; these masks are not designed to fit tightly and wearing more than one will not improve fit.
- To ensure the best fit of a disposable face mask, **knot and tuck** ear loops of a 3-ply mask:
  - Knot the ear loops of a 3-ply face mask where they join the edge of the mask.
  - Fold and tuck the unneeded material under the edges.
  - For video instructions, see: <https://youtu.be/UANi8Cc71A>

For more mask-related tips, please visit [the CDC's website](#).

### **Submit Your Questions About the Vaccine**

We have an email box where you can submit questions related to COVID-19 and the vaccine that you would like to see answered in a future edition of this newsletter. Please submit your question to [COVID19EmployeeQuestions@kindred.com](mailto:COVID19EmployeeQuestions@kindred.com).

As always, thank you for all you do for our patients, our partners, and each other.

Regards,

Ben Breier  
Chief Executive Officer  
Kindred Healthcare

### **Responses to Frequently Asked Questions**

*Kindred has established a dedicated mailbox ([COVID19EmployeeQuestions@kindred.com](mailto:COVID19EmployeeQuestions@kindred.com)) to collect and answer any questions you may have.*

**For the full list of the most current responses to frequently asked questions and other updates, please check the following page on a regular basis: <https://www.kindredhealthcare.com/employees/covid-19-updates>**