

Dear Family Member,

Throughout the COVID pandemic, we have reached out to you to ask that you consent to the vaccination of your loved one who resides in our facility. We are again reaching out to ask that you consent to the bivalent COVID booster. This letter will explain the reason for our request.

***Why are we reaching out?***

Long-term care facilities in our State continue to see outbreaks from highly transmissible COVID-19 variants, and we need your help to protect your loved one and the other residents who live with them.

In fact, the New Jersey Department of Health has reported that once an outbreak is found in a facility, it is very difficult to resolve. Residents living in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities are among the most vulnerable to complications from the virus. Many already have weakened immune systems, and getting sick, especially with COVID-19, can have serious implications.

***The change in the booster vaccine and why it is more effective:***

The new bivalent vaccine has been formulated to work against both the original COVID virus and the most recent variant, Omicron. Since the start of the pandemic, the virus has mutated several times. The newly updated booster protects from not only the original COVID-19 virus but the Omicron and its subvariants which we continue to battle in our State.

Vaccines continue to be the safest and most effective protection against COVID-19 and its variants. And the good news is your family member can receive the new booster AND a flu vaccine at the same time, bolstering protection for the months ahead.

***What's next:***

Our staff at the facility will be setting up clinics for the newly updated booster with our pharmacy partner. Both the COVID and Flu vaccines will be given at these events. It will be the best opportunity for our residents and staff to be protected during the time of year when both diseases are most active.

We will be offering all phases of the COVID vaccine – whether your family member needs to start the primary series or receive any of the booster shots, they will all be available for them.

***Our Ask of You:***

We need **your help and consent** to get your family member up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines – including the newly updated booster.

Helping to keep your family member fully protected not only keeps them safe but their fellow residents and our staff as well.

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns regarding the vaccines. Our clinical team will be most willing to discuss these with you and work together to ensure your loved one is kept safe in our facility.

Again, we encourage you to provide your consent today.