



## NPA Position on COVID-19 Vaccines

NPA supports the adoption of mandatory COVID-19 vaccine requirements for PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for Elderly) organization (PO) staff, allowing for exemptions as specified by federal or state law. Further, we strongly recommend POs act quickly to comply with the recent announcement by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that COVID-19 vaccination of staff in Medicare and Medicaid-certified entities will be required, consistent with an interim final rule to be issued in October.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic PACE organizations (POs) have worked diligently to protect the older, chronically ill adults they serve from exposure to and harm from the virus. Data clearly indicate that frail older adults and others with underlying health conditions and diseases are particularly susceptible to serious illness and death as a result of COVID-19 infection. While upholding their commitment to meet the needs of those who have been entrusted to their care, POs have undertaken numerous measures to balance the provision of essential care with strategies to protect PACE participants and staff from infection.

Scientific research has determined COVID-19 vaccines to be safe and effective at reducing the risk of infection and spread of the virus, and to dramatically reduce the risk of illness, hospitalizations, and death overall. With the availability of FDA-approved vaccines, it is vitally important that all eligible individuals are vaccinated against COVID-19.

Recognizing the effectiveness of the vaccine in mitigating negative impacts of the COVID-19 virus, the National PACE Association (NPA) strongly encourages POs to continue to:

- » Educate participants and their family members about the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines.
- » Administer or arrange access to the vaccine for all participants.
- » Educate staff about the disproportionately negative impact of COVID-19 on frail older adults and the critical role vaccines play in mitigating risk of illness and death.
- » Provide education and informational resources to staff about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines.
- » Support staff in obtaining COVID-19 vaccines, including by providing paid time off for vaccination.

NPA continues to be proud of all the valiant efforts of PACE organizations have taken to date to keep participants and staff as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.