

## THE TRUSTEE

March 2021

PROCEED WITH CAUTION

The following CDC recommendations apply to non-healthcare settings. Fully vaccinated people can:

1. Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.
2. Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID 19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.
3. Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure, if asymptomatic. For now, fully vaccinated people should continue to:
  - A. Take precautions in public like wearing a well-fitted mask and physical distancing.
  - B. Wear masks, practice physical distancing, and adhere to other prevention measures when visiting with unvaccinated people who are at increased risk for severe COVID 19 disease or who have an unvaccinated household member who is at increased risk for severe COVID 19 disease.
  - C. Wear masks, maintain physical distance, and practice other prevention measures when visiting with unvaccinated people from multiple households.
  - D. Avoid medium and large-size gatherings.
  - E. Get tested if experiencing COVID 19 symptoms.
  - F. Follow guidance issued by individual employers.
  - G. Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations. In New York State, the age of eligibility for receiving a COVID 19 vaccination has been lowered to 60. Members can sign up on the Ulster County Health Department website, at a participating pharmacy, or at the website of Dr. Neal Smoller of The Apothecary who has been working to provide vaccinations to at-risk populations.

KRTF President Linda Monfette was able to secure 150 shots for retirees from Dr. Smoller. His information website is: [drnealsmoller.com](http://drnealsmoller.com). There, you can join a waitlist to be notified when doses are available. Select a time and you're scheduled. The Pfizer and Moderna two shot vaccines are current availabilities, but the Johnson & Johnson one shot should become more abundant by April 1.

### VIRUS VARIANTS

The virus variants have mutations in the virus genome that cause the virus to act in different ways and affect public health. They may cause more severe disease, spread disease more easily among people, and affect the effectiveness of current vaccines. As with strains of the flu, genetic mutations are expected. Some may dominate and others may subside.

**CDC KNOWN:** The COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing COVID-19 disease, especially severe illness and death. Prevention steps help stop the spread of the virus and these steps remain important even after vaccination.

**CDC UNKNOWN:** How effective the vaccines are against variants of the virus that causes COVID-19. Early data show the vaccines may work against some variants, but could be less effective against others.

Do the vaccines keep people from spreading the disease? Early data indicates they do, but, as more are vaccinated, the data may change. How long the vaccines protect people is unknown in these early stages of vaccination.

### ***GET MOTIVATING!***

The American Psychological Association has noted the effect of the overwhelming demands some people have faced during the year long pandemic. Increased stress has affected the behavior and health of many, 40% of people have gained weight, sleep patterns have been disrupted, and alcohol use has increased. These behaviors may lead to health issues like diabetes, hypertension, boredom, loneliness, anxiety, and depression. As the springtime approaches, people are encouraged to get outside, breath fresh air, get sunshine, walk, talk to others, and develop better eating habits and more inclusive routines. Resolutions may be more realistic and achievable in the springtime than at New Years.

### **PART B MEDICARE: PETER PRINCIPAL ADMINISTRATION**

By now, retirees are aware of the Medicare Part B fiasco where, for the 2018 year, the district shorted minimum reimbursements to eligible Medicare recipients by \$25/mo. and then required them to produce proof of Medicare payments to receive the due monies. For 2020, Medicare members were shorted \$9.60/mo. in the first semi-annual payment. Again, promises made, promises broken. If this behavior were to continue unchallenged, it produces a new normal practice and all future reimbursements are in jeopardy. The district has treated the matter as unimportant. We are now three years removed from the most egregious of improprieties. Overdue payments are due by the June reimbursements.

### **IN MEMORIAM:**

Kathryn "Katie" Miller | Kent Korber | Dorothy Hughes | Gloria Reamer