**COVID-19 VACCINATION: SAMPLE MEDIA STATEMENT & MESSAGES**

***Updated: December 4, 2020***

**GENERAL STATEMENT**

We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines as soon as they approved by the FDA.

We appreciate and support the decision made by the federal government to prioritize long-term care residents and staff in the distributions of the COVID-19 vaccine. We are working with State to ensure that seniors and their caregivers receive an effective vaccination as soon as possible.

Our vaccination process for staff and residents will be based on guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health as well as official recommendations from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) that has yet to be released.

Based on what we know today, we estimate that COVID-19 vaccinations at [Insert Organization Name] could begin [as early as mid-December or [Insert Time Range or estimated dates, if appropriate].

**SAMPLE TALKING POINTS ON RESIDENT & STAFF COVID-19 VACCINATIONS**

* **Importance of Getting the Vaccine**: We encourage all residents and staff to get the two-shot COVID-19 vaccination because it is one of the best ways to protect everyone from the virus.
	+ Vaccines will work with the immune system, so it is ready to fight the virus if exposed.
	+ Getting these shots will not only protect residents from being infected; it will help us take a big step towards ending this pandemic.
* **Vaccination Process:** Residents will receive their vaccines through the federal [pharmacy partnership program](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/long-term-care/pharmacy-partnerships.html) (PPP). The PPP has a plan to offer multiple on-site clinics at [Insert Organization Name} to facilitate the two doses needed for this vaccine. For staff vaccinations, we are working with local county public health office. This infrastructure will be helpful in ensuring that long=term care residents and staff are among the first to receive the vaccine.
* **Risk of Getting COVID-19 from Vaccination:** There is no risk of getting COVID-19 from the vaccination. This vaccination contains no actual COVID-19 virus.
* **Safety of COVID-19 Vaccine:** Scientists have worked on coronavirus research for decades starting with the original SARS outbreak and influenza. Scientists only needed to isolate certain things about COVID-19 to begin creating a vaccine because we already know so much about the type of virus. Due to the public health crisis created by the pandemic, many private, government and independent groups came together and cooperated on a vaccine. This scale of cooperation is not typical, and the partnership created resources and information sharing to develop the vaccine faster.
* **Potential Side Effects from COVID-19 Vaccination:** A recipient may experience some side effects from the vaccine such as a sore arm, mild aches, or fever. This is the immune system responding to the vaccine and is expected. This does not mean the person is getting sick with COVID-19. We need the vaccine to trigger this immune response to produce the immunity we need against COVID-19.
* **Payment for Vaccinations: T**here will be no cost to residents or staff to receive the vaccine.
* **Impact on Visitation in Long Term Care:** Long term care facilities will not be able to return to normal until a vaccine is administered to most residents and staff. As soon as we start to successfully administer the vaccine in our communities, we hope we can begin to discuss what’s next for our community and for long-term care across our state. Until that time, we will continue our infection prevention and control practices and follow the most current visitation guidance from the state, even after we start vaccinations.