



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Faculty, Staff and Trainees,

There is so much going on that it is difficult to decide what to address specifically.

I thought I would start with one of the many things that are top of mind: vaccines. It is the case that the arrival of this much anticipated vaccine could be considered a holiday gift. Many of you have been invited to be vaccinated and many of you have received at least one dose.

There are a few troubling things that we need to keep in mind, however. A crucial issue is that there is a stark disparity across the health system in terms of who is scheduling an appointment once invited. What we see is that the nurses, physicians, pharmacists are signing up at rates of about 80%. However, those who work in food or environmental services, for example, are responding at significantly lower rates. We know that these latter groups tend to have a significant proportion of employees who are Brown or Black.

Vaccine hesitancy is real and we want to make sure that everyone has the right information to make a decision about how to proceed. On Friday, there will be a CPUP Town Hall with a panel in which Black and Brown employees who have already been vaccinated talk about their concerns about the vaccine and why they decided to go ahead. The panel includes employees from all levels of the organization and will be a great opportunity to learn more about the vaccine.

A second essential issue is that while the vaccine is highly effective at attenuating the severity of the infection, we don't know whether vaccination prevents a person from transmitting the virus if exposed. That means that we must still wear masks and practice physical distancing until a significant proportion of the population has been vaccinated or has survived the illness.

Yet another concern is about family members. Even those of you who are eligible to be vaccinated are likely thinking about your partner, your children, your parents. As you know, the health system is following public health CDC direction. However, in the coming weeks, we will probably see more availability starting with those at greater risk.

As always, please take good care of yourself and make sure you stick to your routines in terms of exercise, sleep and eating. Thank you so much for all of the important work that you do. We have a very important mission and your contribution is key to moving ahead with our goals.

Warmly, m

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

Vision

Promoting health for the brain and mind to transform lives and the world.

Mission

Penn Psychiatry develops and implements new ideas to understand, prevent, and treat disorders of the brain and mind, through innovative research and discoveries, outstanding educational, world renowned clinical services, and transformational public health policies.