

COVID-19 Update

April 1: Patient and Workforce Vaccination Status, Protect Chicago Plus Mass Vaccination Event, and a Critical Care Physician Reflects on a Year That Changed the World

Today's issue includes an update on patient and workforce vaccination status, as well as information about an upcoming Protect Chicago Plus mass vaccination event. It also features the personal perspective of a Northwestern Medicine physician on how the past year has impacted her and the field of medicine.

PATIENT VACCINATION STATUS UPDATE

Vaccination invitations have been sent to established patients over 40 years of age who have at least one high-risk medical condition as defined by the Illinois Department of Public Health, and NM is in the process of inviting established patients over 18 years of age who meet the appropriate criteria.

Several new documents are available for physicians and clinicians to assist patients in accessing proof of COVID-19 vaccination:

- **COVID-19 Immunization Summary report** is available under the Misc tab in the Epic Chart Review. It can be printed from this tab and provided to patients as proof of vaccination. The report includes the CDC logo.
- **MyNM Instructions for Finding COVID-19 Immunization** is a printable tip sheet that provides patients instructions for accessing vaccination documentation in MyNM.
- **How to Reconcile External COVID-19 Immunizations** provides physicians and clinicians with tips for documenting proof of COVID-19 vaccination for patients who have received the immunization outside of NM.

For additional information and tip sheets regarding patient vaccination, please visit the “Tip Sheets for Patients” and “Tip Sheets and Protocols for Physicians and Staff” sections in the **Patient Vaccine Toolkit** on Physician Focus and **NMI** (login required).

WORKFORCE VACCINATION TALKING POINTS

Talking points are now available to assist physicians and employees with responding to patients' questions regarding vaccination status. The talking points provide the following guidance:

- Remind the patient that vaccination status is protected health information and cannot be disclosed without their consent.
- The health and safety of patients and employees is the primary concern at NM.

- Throughout the pandemic, NM continues to follow science-based guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
 - Facility changes have been made to allow for physical distancing.
 - High-touch surfaces are cleaned frequently.
 - Everyone is required to wear a face mask.
 - Before coming to work, all NM staff members must attest that they are free of COVID-19 symptoms.
 - These safety measures are essential, regardless of vaccination status.
 - Additional details about safety at Northwestern Medicine can be found at [nm.org/safety](https://www.nm.org/safety).
- Many in the NM workforce are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 because they chose to get the vaccine; however, vaccination is not required. COVID-19 vaccination decisions are personal and based on a number of factors, including health considerations.

Additional information as well as a copy of the Workforce Vaccination Talking Points are now available in the [Patient Vaccine Toolkit](#) on Physician Focus and [NMI](#) (login required).

PROTECT CHICAGO PLUS MASS VACCINATION EVENT

Northwestern Medicine is partnering with Erie Family Health and the city of Chicago to host Protect Chicago Plus, a mass vaccination event for the residents of West Humboldt Park.

NM is supporting Protect Chicago Plus by providing project management, support staff and community outreach to members of West Humboldt Park for awareness, education and appointment scheduling. Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine residents and students will support patient check-in and on-site education just prior to vaccination and volunteers from NM will support other day-of-vaccination activities, such as wayfinding and general logistics.

Opportunities for NM staff to volunteer for Protect Chicago Plus will be available through Team NM. For more information about volunteering and joining Team NM, please visit the [Team NM page](#) on NMI (login required). Once there, click on the “Volunteer Event Registration” and search for Protect Chicago Plus opportunities.

PULMONOLOGIST/CRITICAL CARE PHYSICIAN REFLECTS ON A YEAR THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

As March comes to a close, perspectives of NM physicians from different regions of the health system are being shared to mark the end of the first year of the pandemic. Here, [Michelle Prickett, MD](#), pulmonologist and critical care specialist at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and Glenview Outpatient Center, reflects on how events of the past year have impacted her, NM and the world.

Think back to the moment when you realized that you were treating your first patient with COVID-19. What was that moment like for you, both as a physician and as a human being?

The first COVID-19 patients we cared for in the ICU were not formally diagnosed until days later. It was a difficult time not knowing what to expect. Patients with severe COVID-19 pneumonia had a unique presentation, and we learned rapidly from them and through discussion with others in the field. It was very difficult to face the unknown from a management perspective and simultaneously try to maintain our own health. Admittedly, there were a lot of late nights filled with worries and fear.

For you as a physician, what do you think has been the most significant change that will last beyond the healthcare crisis?

The ability to offer telemedicine as an option will be a helpful addition to our ability to practice medicine. Having patients travel great distances for specialized care has always been a challenge. Knowing that now we can offer options to still provide expertise but with less burden on patients and families is a welcome addition from the pandemic.

Thinking back over the past year, what are some of the moments that stand out as pivotal and of which you are most proud?

I am most proud of our teams as a whole, as they pitched in to find solutions. I am forever grateful for the care teams and front-line nurses, respiratory therapists, physicians and other clinical care specialists who worked collaboratively together every day. This gratitude also extends to volunteers who took over front-line needs, to our amazing facilities staff, equipment specialists, Nutrition and Environmental Services, and to a command center that made the wheels keep turning.

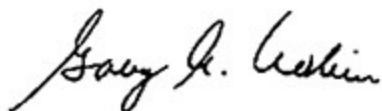
I am most proud of working with so many who knew the risks and still volunteered to help because they knew people's lives were on the line. We were able to expand our ICU teams to allow for more care due to a large group of volunteers from all areas of medicine, which included residents, fellows, CRNAs, APPs and RN communicators all learning from and leaning on each other.

Overall, how do you think this pandemic has impacted and shaped you as a physician, and shaped Northwestern Medicine as a health system?

This pandemic has made a sizable impression on me as a physician in both good ways and bad. Admittedly, it has been traumatizing to live through a year of constant stressors and repeated deaths, and admittedly, it will take time to heal. However, the pandemic also has shown me the power of collaboration and teamwork, and how far we can go in medicine and science when we work together. Vaccines are an example of a medical marvel given how quickly our scientists came together to find a way to develop and test safe and effective vaccines. Vaccination is our way forward, and it demonstrates the healing powers of all of us working together to protect our community.

*More moments from the past year that are important to remember, as well as those that will never be forgotten, can be viewed in a new infographic called **A Year That Changed the World** now on HealthBeat at [nm.org/healthbeat](https://www.northwestern.edu/healthbeat).*

Thank you to all of the physicians and providers across NM for your continued commitment to our *Patients First* mission and for your compassionate care of patients throughout the pandemic.



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