

COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE



Letter of Instruction (LOI) for COVID-19 Vaccine Information Town Hall

Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.

TA-635-APR21

Letter of Instruction (LOI) for COVID-19 Vaccine Information Town Hall

Purpose: To provide recommended guidance and a Power Point slide template for DoD installation leaders to use during a public forum or town hall to inform their community on COVID-19 vaccine availability, the vaccination process and education related to safety and efficacy of the vaccine.

Application: This LOI applies to all installation leadership responsible for the acquisition, rollout and dispensing of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Background: The Department of Defense (DoD) has provided a prioritization guideline for dispensing the COVID-19 vaccine and information on conducting vaccination sites. Due to the number of questions related to the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) granted by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the safety and efficacy of the vaccine and the prioritization for dispensing the vaccine, it is recommended that each installation leadership team conduct a series of COVID-19 vaccine information town halls.

Situation: While public health and healthcare professionals likely rely heavily on both World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) resources during a public health emergency, at the local level people often rely on their local health director, physician or public health emergency officer to provide an accurate assessment of the risks their community is facing. In responding to an outbreak to an emerging infectious disease, where information is continuously evolving as more data become available, a local, credible, trusted voice can have a significant impact on the perception of risk. These informative town halls will allow for recommended Subject Matter Experts (SME) and leadership to address multiple groups of interested stakeholders and insure that all attendees hear the same information, messages and guidelines at the same time. These stakeholders can then return to their respective units/activities/facilities or groups to carry the consistent information to others.

Responsibility: The installation commander in coordination with the Military Treatment Facility (MTF) commander and the Public Health Emergency Officer (PHEO) is responsible for organizing, coordinating and conducting COVID-19 vaccine information town halls. The installation commander and MTF commander/PHEO in coordination with the selected SME's are responsible for preparing and presenting recommended and applicable information for identified stakeholders (*please see recommendations in attachment A*). At a minimum, the following representatives should present the outlined material provided in the power point slide deck and the attachments:

- Installation Commander
- Physician with expertise in vaccines or Immunization
Clinic OIC
- PHEO
- Immunization Clinic NCOIC

Important Note: *The Commander and Subject Matter Experts who participate should be the same each time you repeat the town hall meeting. (For example, if you have multiple town halls scheduled for different times or dates, ensure that the scheduling allows for the same leaders to participate at ALL events for consistency. Different representatives will often use different language allowing for misinterpretation to occur.)*

Action: The recommended guidance and power point slide templet provided would be used to provide general and installation specific information related to the following topics (*Please also see the attachment A*):

- What is known about the COVID-19 vaccine
- Safety, Efficacy and Transparency related to the COVID-19 vaccine
- What to expect after getting the COVID-19 vaccination
- General information on the vaccination process
- What each stakeholder needs to know before getting the COVID-19 vaccine
- How each stakeholder can help in the vaccination process and support to reduce the spread of COVID-19

Who to include/invite: Service Members, families, DoD civilians, retirees and contractors on the installation eligible for vaccine. Additionally, recommend the following representatives be invited:

- Mental Health SME
- Chaplain
- PAO (recommend all levels to include hospital PAO and installation/base PAO)
- Representative for installation/base paper
- Representative from Family Support Group
- Representative from each Senior Spouse Group/ Enlisted Spouse Group
- Representative from Child Development Services/ Youth Services
- Representative from hospital/clinic (to provide information concerning operating times)
- Representative from each unit/activity on installation/ base

This may require a “must attend” from the base/installation commander for the unit/activity representatives, however this action has proved successful for one message/one voice

Additional resources: Recommended informational products, to include Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), handouts and fact sheets should be made available for download by participants after the town hall and utilized in public areas on the installation and on installation websites for consistency.

- [Army Public Health Center COVID 19 Resource Website](#)
- [Acting Defense Secretary Receives COVID-19 Vaccine | Video](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) | COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit](#)
 - [Social Media Toolkit](#)
- [DHA-IPM 20-004: DoD COVID-19 Vaccination Program Implementation](#)
- [Operation Warp Speed](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services \(HHS\) | COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [U.S. Food & Drug Administration \(FDA\) | COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

Attachment A

Recommended Outline for COVID-19 Vaccination Town hall Information Session

Town hall meeting should be scheduled and announced with as much advance notification to those attending as possible. Recommend multiple layers of notification to include:

- Flyers
- Announcements on local Web Site / social media
- Posters in clinics/hospital/commissary/chapel/vet clinic/schools/CDC/youth services/gymnasium/ units and activities/etc.

Recommend scheduling of at least one hour to one and a half hours (with notation you will stay as long as needed for complete open discussion). Also recommend the Commander and Subject Matter Experts involved allow enough time in their schedule so that they do not have to leave the event prior to its conclusion (*this results in the perception that the audience is not as important as other issues*).

Important Note: The Commander and Subject Matter Experts who participate should be the same each time you repeat the town hall meeting. (For example, if you have multiple town halls scheduled for different times or dates, ensure that the scheduling allows for the same leaders to participate at ALL events for consistency. Different representatives will often use different speak allowing for misinterpretation to occur.)

The recommended schedule for the town hall:

Begin with introduction and welcome by the base/installation Commander

- This should be brief and allow for the opportunity to thank the attendees and provide statements of empathy and transparency. (*Please see the sample script provided in attachment B*)
- Recommend the Vaccine SME or Physician or Public Health Emergency Officer follow the Commander by providing brief comments on what we know (*See sample slide deck, this should be just a few bullets with key messages*)
- Additionally, recommend the Vaccine SME, or Physician, or Public Health Emergency Officer provide brief comments on medical recommendations (*See sample slide deck, this should also be just a few bullets with key messages*)
- Recommend the Commander then give a few brief comments on the commitment to continued safety and wellbeing by announcing the team effort and commitment items (*See sample slide deck for suggestions*).

The above comments from the Leadership should take no more than 15 to 20 minutes.

Recommend the Commander then turn over the floor for open, honest and transparent discussion with questions and answers. The respective prepared Subject Matter Experts would then field the questions based on topic.

Important Note: All identified Subject Matter Experts should take a significant amount of time to review the attached FAQ's for their areas of expertise. These have been prepared as a "worst case" catch all and note they may not all be asked, however you will be prepared if they are presented.

Attachment B

Recommend Command Opening Remarks for COVID-19 Town Hall Information Session

I want to express to my sincerest thanks and appreciation for the professionalism and expertise displayed by our health care providers, staff and administrators during this challenging and rapidly changing COVID-19 vaccination process here in our community.

The way forward will require all of us to stand together, support each other, and continue in taking all precautions possible for the safety of our military members, family members, and DoD personnel. I have seen many instances of dedication to safety and wellbeing across our community that each one of you have provided in the past months and the vaccination opportunities are the next step in a return to a new normal.

We will continue to take all the steps necessary to ensure the transparent, efficient and timely sharing of information related to the COVID-19 vaccination availability, safety and access for our Military members, family members, civilians, retirees and contractors.

Over the course of the past month there have been enormous amounts of information that has come from numerous sources, both accurate and inaccurate. We acknowledge that some information has been confusing, misleading and even alarming. It is our intent to provide you all with up to date, accurate and helpful information during our meeting here today.

We have assembled a panel of subject matter experts to provide what we know to date and then answer your questions and concerns. At the conclusion of our meeting, the information we have provided to you will also be available at an additional meeting scheduled for (insert date/time/place) and we would like to you to encourage co-workers, neighbors and community members who were unable to be with us today, to attend the next session. We will also post the key messages discussed on our (website) and we have handouts for you to download at the conclusion of our meeting with additional resources.

At this time, I would like to give you a brief overview of our agenda: *(Slide with agenda items to be shown at this time while talking through bullet points)*

I would now like to introduce our Physician, Vaccination SME or Public Health Officer to discuss the current vaccination information available for the installation, recommendations for getting vaccinated and the latest updates.



APHC COVID-19 information:
<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/covid19>



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For current COVID-19 information:

<https://phc.amedd.army.mil/covid19>
<https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

The Military Health System Nurse Advice Line is available 24/7:

Call 1-800-874-2273 option #1
or visit <https://www.health.mil/!-Am-A/Media/Media-Center/NAL-Day-at-a-glance>

For more information, contact your installation's Department of Public Health.

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The Army COVID-19 Information Hotline:

Call 1-800-984-8523,
Overseas DSN 312-421-3700,
Stateside DSN 421-3700