

**From:** MICHAEL WASSERMAN [wassdoc@aol.com](mailto:wassdoc@aol.com)

**Subject:** Fwd: Additional Guidance on Addressing Staff Vaccine Hesitancy

**Date:** December 13, 2020 at 2:15 AM

**To:** Daniel Tartakovsky [dtartakovsky@jbrpt.org](mailto:dtartakovsky@jbrpt.org), Eliot Fishman [efishman@jbrpt.org](mailto:efishman@jbrpt.org), Emily Schlichting [eschlichting@volunteer.jbrpt.org](mailto:eschlichting@volunteer.jbrpt.org)



I wanted to share another idea. Please see my email below that I sent to the clinical staff of the eight California Veterans Homes.

Based on discussions with an implementation scientist with the VA Nursing Homes, I think that there are immediate steps that can be taken on Inauguration Day in regards to the 134 Federal VA Nursing Homes. I realize that there is an opportunity to message best practices to the rest of the nursing home industry through the VA. The Biden-Harris Administration may not be able to dictate practices to the for-profit nursing home industry, but they can model best practices in the homes that the Administration is responsible for.

- 1) Assure nursing home staff a living wage
- 2) N95s to all staff both at work and at home
- 3) Home test kits for COVID-19
- 4) Continue with existing Town Hall meetings regarding vaccine hesitancy to maximize vaccination rates
- 5) Commit to leadership training for each home's leadership team

Again, I'm happy to share more details with the appropriate people.

Mike

P.S. A real life experiment is about to take place. Los Angeles County, most likely the county with the greatest number of nursing homes in the country (385, more than many states), has opted out of the federal vaccination program through CVS and Walgreens. They did this with my blessing and support, as I believe that the "one size fits all" approach that this administration has taken will lead to chaos. Other counties may be following suit. At the very least, this will give us an opportunity to compare different models and look for best practices. Our Delphi group will attempt to monitor. Hopefully, the Biden-Harris Administration will quickly move to a mode of monitoring various approaches and analyzing them to identify best practices. It's a shame that this hasn't been done over the past nine months, or at least it hasn't been allowed by the leadership. There very well may be people who have some answers to such questions.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** MICHAEL WASSERMAN <[wassdoc@aol.com](mailto:wassdoc@aol.com)>

**Subject:** Additional Guidance on Addressing Staff Vaccine Hesitancy

**Date:** December 12, 2020 at 10:58:36 PM PST

I've spent the past three days immersed in speaking to various experts in vaccine hesitancy, particularly related to nursing home staff and communities of color. Two best practices became clear to me that I wanted to share with everyone.

First, having "town hall" meetings with staff is definitely a best practice.

Second, ideally, the first "town hall" meeting should focus primarily on letting staff share their concerns. It's really important not to try to convince them to take the vaccine, but to make sure that their voices are being heard. One of my colleagues used the terms "*respect, honor and value*" in regards to how to address staff. The second "town hall" would be the ideal scenario for delivering the educational information about the vaccine and then allowing questions. A third "town hall" would give staff a chance to digest all of the information and ask more questions.

Finally, as much as we all know that from a scientific perspective maximizing vaccinations will lead to the best outcomes, it will be necessary to have patience in allowing staff to process the information and come to their own conclusions. In the long run, that patience will pay dividends in many ways.

Thanks again for all you do for our veterans. In many ways, the front line staff represent another group of heroes. There is no question in regards to the compassion that they show to the veterans they serve. This is the opportunity to demonstrate to the front line staff the value that they bring with the work they do every day.

I look forward to hearing how this goes. We have all been learning new things for the past 9 months, and this is just part of our journey.

Mike Wasserman