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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Catholic Health long-term care facilities begin rollout of coronavirus vaccine**

*Partnership with Walgreens will immunize residents and staff*

Long-term care facilities across Catholic Health will begin in-facility COVID-19 vaccinations for both residents and staff on December 28 as part of the federal distribution program with Walgreens Pharmacy.

The Western New York healthcare system has four long-term facilities, including Father Baker Manor, McAuley Residence, Mercy Nursing Facility at OLV, and St. Catherine Labouré Health Care Center. Facilities like these have been put at the top of the priority list for the national vaccine effort because of the high-risk populations they serve.

Walgreens pharmacists and technicians will administer the vaccines, which were approved for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration this month. They will return to the facility in three weeks to administer the second required dose.

Staff, including clinical and non-clinical workers, are getting their shots in a central location, while residents will receive the vaccine in their rooms where they will be monitored by nursing personnel afterwards for any side effects. Consent among residents has been high, with each resident, a family member or guardian signing the consent form. Consent among staff has also been high with many already receiving the vaccine through Catholic Health.

Like nursing homes across the country, Catholic Health's facilities have been forced to limit or restrict visitations during the coronavirus pandemic to ensure the safety of residents. While much has been done to create an engaging environment, including hallway bingo and crafts, residents have not been able to participate in group activities since March.

"The arrival of the vaccine gives us all hope for a return to a sense of normalcy for our residents, patients and caregivers," said Tom Gleason, senior vice president of Catholic Health's Home & Community Based Care. "While we don't have an exact timeframe, we look forward to being able to reopen communal dining, reintroduce social activities, and welcome back families into our facilities."