

More than two-thirds of Indiana nursing home staff would take COVID-19 vaccine

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In a study conducted shortly before COVID-19 vaccines became available in the U.S., more than two-thirds of nursing home and assisted living staff in Indiana indicated willingness to receive a vaccine immediately or in the future. The study was led by researchers from Regenstrief Institute, Indiana University and the State of Indiana. Vaccine uptake by front-line staff is important because it will help protect against serious illness and death for the high-risk people who receive care in these facilities.

"The vaccines offer the opportunity to return to a more normal life within the nursing facility, but that cannot be achieved without staff being willing to take the [vaccine](#)," said study leader Kathleen Unroe, M.D., MHA, a Regenstrief research scientist, IU School of Medicine associate professor of medicine and a geriatrician. "The rates of [willingness](#) found in this survey are a positive sign, and more staff may be amenable to the vaccines if they receive more education and outreach."

Nursing home and assisted living facility staff were

included in the first phase of vaccine distribution, so the Indiana State Department of Health sent an anonymous survey to staff in facilities across the state to gain an understanding of willingness to participate. More than 8,000 responded. 45 percent indicated they would be willing to take a vaccine as soon as it was available, and an additional 24 percent said they would take it at some point in the future.

Staff members were surveyed on their reasons for not wanting to receive a vaccine. The most common responses were:

- Concern over side effects (70%)
- Health concerns (34%)
- Questions about effectiveness (20%)
- Religious reasons (12%)

"We found significant differences in willingness to take a vaccine among staff sub-groups, for example older employees were more interested in getting it as soon as possible, whereas direct care clinical [staff](#) who deal directly with patients were less likely to report willingness to receive the vaccine in the first wave," said Justin Blackburn, Ph.D., associate professor at Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health at IUPUI. "This information can help [public health](#) and facility leaders identify which groups may need education and outreach about the vaccines so that these efforts can successfully protect residents." Dr. Blackburn is also a program faculty with the Indiana University National Library of Medicine Public Health Informatics T15 program hosted by Regenstrief Institute and Fairbanks School of Public Health.

More information: Kathleen T. Unroe et al. Willingness of Long-Term Care Staff to Receive a COVID-19 Vaccine: A Single State Survey, *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/jgs.17022](https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.17022)

Provided by Regenstrief Institute

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