



Update 51 - COVID-19 – From Office of the Medical Director 09DEC2020 1530

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To: All EMS Personnel in the EMS System for Metropolitan Oklahoma City & Tulsa

I'm certain that each of you is aware that we will soon have vaccines available in the United States that are designed to help protect us against the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

By soon, it could be at the end of this week as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers the request for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for these vaccines from Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna. In time, requests for the same from other vaccine manufacturers, such as AstraZeneca, are expected.

This is a critical time in our journey together through this viral pandemic. It is evident to me as I look at our EMS system's daily calls involving confirmed or suspected COVID-19, as well as the volumes of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 in our area hospital's Emergency Departments and Intensive Care Units, that the amount of COVID-19 in Oklahoma (and across the United States) is deeply concerning and growing.

There is no proverbial "silver bullet" in our collective fight against the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Vaccines are not a one size fits every COVID-19 challenge answer, BUT, AND VERY IMPORTANTLY, they are powerful tools that we need towards our health – individually, as families, as an EMS system, as communities, nationally, and globally.

Today, I want to share with you two resources that give me inspiration and a renewed hope that we WILL get through this pandemic – for ourselves, for each other, for our families, and for our patients.

1. As you may know, the United Kingdom approved the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine last week. The first UK citizens (outside of the safety and effectiveness trials earlier this year) to be vaccinated happened yesterday. This is a delightful account of one man's experience. I watched it a couple of times, smiling and laughing a bit as he shares some of his philosophies. It's not surprising that he is so spry at 91 years of age. I think because you enjoy helping people, you'll enjoy this:

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2020/12/08/uk-coronavirus-covid-19-pfizer-biontech-vaccine-rollout-vanier-intv-intl-ldn-vpx.cnn>

2. Now, the second video. I'm going to guess that watching a 43-minute video about SARS-CoV-2 vaccines is NOT at the top of your "Things I Hope I Get to Do Today" list. That's quite okay. Even I don't pray for more 43-minute videos to watch. But I'm going to ask you to invest this less than ¾ of an hour into your health – because YOUR health matters. It matters to your family, it matters to your colleagues that get to work with you, it matters to your patients that get better because you care for them in the times they need your compassion and skills the most. YOUR health matters for a lot of reasons – all of them good.

There's a bunch I want to share, but I'll space more of it out over the next Updates because I don't want to get too much in the way of you watching this video. Just like with Dr. Osterholm podcasts or longer articles I might share via links, this doesn't have to be watched in one sitting – you might want to do it 10 or so minutes at a time if that feels a better fit for your schedule.

This video is honestly better than one I could have produced. I don't know the presenter. He seems highly educated about how immune systems and vaccines work and his numbers are spot on about the trials that were conducted over the course of 2020 that brought us these safe vaccines. Safe...that's a word I don't want to gloss over, and I don't use that word lightly.

It does seem like these vaccines were developed quickly because they were. There has never been a faster success story in vaccine development as what we are witnessing right now. And if you are applying your critical thinking skills, you have every right to ask: "Hey! This fast development of vaccine? Does fast still include safe? Really?" In fact, if you aren't asking that, well, maybe you should. Now, if I'm saying you should, then I hope you'll believe I'm not trying to "sell" you a vaccine (and for the public record, I don't have any investments in any of these vaccine related companies that I know about – maybe there is a tiny amount of something in a mutual fund, but I honestly don't even know if there is as I let my financial advisor do that stuff while I keep my head down working to take care of others). What I am trying to do is simply share the science.

This video does incredible work towards helping us understand what defines success in a vaccine in the first place, the many steps – all safety based – that gets a vaccine from concept to approval, how the vaccines work in our bodies, and why there is a lot of enthusiasm among physicians and scientists because of the study results establishing the effectiveness of these vaccines. When you watch it, I encourage you to watch it with colleagues at work and/or family at home. Pause and talk a bit about what the information means to you. I think you'll find, as I did, there is no accident to these vaccines. It is incredibly precision science that is involved every step of the way.

I'm happy to answer any questions (as best as I can) you may have as you consider whether to receive this vaccination as soon as it can be available to you. The Oklahoma State Department of Health plan for SARS-CoV-2 vaccinations for EMS professionals does show there are many people that do understand the risks that you and I face in our day-to-day duties.

Two final points, before I share this video link: I want to thank Tulsa Fire Chief Michael Baker for introducing me to this video. I might have eventually found it, or not, but I certainly got to it faster because of his generosity in sharing it. We are always smarter and safer working as a team in our EMS system. So, thanks, Chief Baker; and just today, as in literally while I was writing this Update in the last 15 mins, I received an email from the Department of Emergency Medicine at the University of Oklahoma School of Community Medicine wanting to know if I wanted to get vaccinated in their partnership with the Tulsa Health Department and Hillcrest Medical Center. My answer via email was exactly this: "YES for me!" I'll find a way to video my vaccination so you'll be able to see firsthand that I'd never ask you to do what I'm unwilling to do myself. I'm grateful beyond words (yes, believe it or not) to the many, many, many scientists behind the scenes and all those involved in the logistics that will bring us these vaccines for the gift of improving our health.

Now, here's the link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35Idb_ICU4o

Vigilance. Safety. Evidence-Based Service to Others.

Let's be careful out there.

Dr. Goodloe

And... a special P.S.: Wear that PPE! We're not safe yet.