NEWS RELEASE

North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System | Office of Communication & Outreach

For Immediate Release

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NF/SGVHS Expands Offering of COVID-19 Booster Shots

N. FLORIDA/S. GEORGIA. The safety and care of Veterans and our workforce are top priorities for the Department of Veterans of Affairs. Effective immediately, North Florida/ South Georgia Veterans Health System (NF/SGVHS) is offering Veterans and employees the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine booster shots, in addition to the Pfizer booster shot. **Note: The J&J COVID-19 Vaccine booster will not be available until after November 3, 2021**

"Vaccines remain the best way of protecting Veterans, staff in our community against COVID-19," said David Isaacks, NF/SGVHS Executive Director. "The expanded FDA and CDC recommendations regarding booster shots allow us to better protect those at higher risk, as well as our community at large."

This decision follows the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) authorization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recommendation for a booster dose of the Moderna or J&J vaccine.

- For those who completed a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine series, the following groups are eligible for a booster shot **at least 6 months** after their second dose:
    - 65 years and older
    - Age 18+ who live in long-term care settings
    - Age 18+ who have underlying medical conditions
    - Age 18+ who work or live in high-risk settings
- For those who had a J&J COVID-19 vaccine, booster shots are recommended for those who are 18 and older and who were vaccinated **at least 2 months ago**.

Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type that they originally received and others, may prefer to get

a different booster. CDC's recommendations now allow for this type of mix and match dosing for booster shots.

While the initial series of vaccines remain highly effective in reducing the likelihood of infection and preventing severe illness, hospitalization, or death among those infected, the purpose of this booster shot is to "boost" antibody protection when it has decreased over time.

VA is also offering the booster to Veterans, their spouses, caregivers and CHAMPVA recipients under the authority of the SAVE LIVES Act, as supply and capacity permits. The Save Lives Act authorizes VA to offer vaccine to Veterans not traditionally eligible for VHA care, and others including spouses and caregivers of Veterans. Those who received a vaccine under authorization of the SAVE LIVES Act and are due for a booster shot may do so in VA if supply permits and should consult with their physician if they have questions about whether they should receive a booster.

Eligible individuals who are interested in receiving their COVID-19 Vaccine booster can contact 352-548-6000 ext.103755 to schedule an appointment or view attached schedule for more information about our no appointment needed clinics. **All those being vaccinated will need to bring their CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card with them.**

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The North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System is one of the nation's leading VA healthcare systems, employing more than 5,600 medical professionals and support staff dedicated to providing high quality care to Veterans residing throughout north Florida and south Georgia. The organization operates fifteen facilities to include two medical centers located in Gainesville and Lake City, and clinics located throughout a 50-county catchment area.

To learn more about the facilities and services offered by the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System, please visit www.northflorida.va.gov or "like us on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/VANFSG, or follow us on Instagram at https://www.instagram.com/VANFSG/

For any questions about the content of this message, please contact the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System Office of Public Affairs at 352-348-7130 or email vhanflpublicaffairs@va.gov.