

**"SPOUSES" (this includes domestic partners), OF VETERANS CAN NOW GET
VACCINATED AT MANILA VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC**

July 15, 2021

QUICK UPDATES:

As of today, July 15, 2021, all Veterans and spouses of Veterans in the Philippines are eligible to receive a COVID-19 Vaccine from VA Manila. VA Manila is not yet able to accommodate caregivers with COVID-19 Vaccines. We also are not able to provide an estimated date when this may be possible. We appreciate your continued patience.

VA Manila will offer Walk-In COVID-19 vaccine clinics on Sunday, July 18 from 11:30A – 2P, and on Monday and Tuesday, July 19 - 20 from 9A-2P. Veterans and Spouses must arrive at the VA Clinic by 2P to receive a walk-in COVID-19 vaccine. Late arriving Veterans will not be able to be accommodated. Veterans are also encouraged not to arrive before the start of scheduled walk-in clinic.

Non-Enrolled Veterans and Spouses who would prefer to be scheduled for a COVID-19 vaccine should complete the attached COVID-19 Scheduling Worksheet and return it to the VA one of three ways: 1.) Veteran's Secure Messenger on MyHealtheVet, 2.) Email to ManilaCOVIDVaccine@va.gov; or 3.) fax to: +63 (02) 8550-3964.

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS FOR ALL VETERANS & SPOUSES

Based on our current available supply, VA Manila is now able to offer COVID-19 vaccine appointments to spouses of Veterans in the Philippines effective immediately. If you are Veteran, it's now time for you and your spouse to get a COVID-19 vaccine from VA Manila. Please consider making an appointment and getting your vaccine as soon as possible. Our goal is to vaccinate as many Veterans as safely and quickly as possible before Saturday, August 7, 2021. Please help us meet our goal.

Veterans who have never been to the VA Manila Outpatient Clinic before, as well as their eligible spouses who wish to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment must complete the attached COVID-19 VACCINATION WORKSHEET: SAVE LIVES ACT and return it to the VA Manila Outpatient Clinic. You can return the attached form to the clinic one of three ways: 1.) use the Veteran's Secure Message System within MyHealthVet and send to your Primary Care Team; 2.) fax the completed form to the VA Manila Outpatient Clinic at: +63-02-8550-3964; or 3.) email the completed form to ManilaCOVIDVaccine@va.gov. Please wait 2 business days after submitting your form for it to be processed. Once processed, you can call to schedule an appointment for your vaccine. The Clinic needs to register you in our medical record system before we are able to schedule you an appointment.

You can also call the Clinic and speak to an enrollment staff member who can enroll you and give you an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine, but given the anticipated demand, phone lines may have extended hold times. To reach the dedicated VA Manila COVID-19 scheduling hotline, please call: +63-02-8550-3888, Press Option 2 for the Outpatient Clinic, and the Option 3 for COVID-19 vaccine appointments. You can also dial the Clinic toll free at [#MyVA](#) (#6982) on any Smart, Sun, or Globe mobile device.

Currently, VA Manila is not able to accommodate caregivers in our vaccination efforts. In accordance with the SAVES LIVES Act, VA Manila is prioritizing Veterans and spouses based on available vaccine supply and anticipated demand. We will continue to provide regular updates about our vaccine availability. Please note, the SAVES LIVES Act did NOT authorize VA to provide COVID-19 vaccines to dependents, and furthermore the J&J Vaccine is not approved for use in minors under the age of 18.

Expanded Hours of Operation for COVID-19 Vaccinations

VA Manila is trying to vaccinate as many Veterans and spouses as possible. To that end, many of our staff will be working extended hours over the next several weekends to offer as many options as possible to get a COVID-19 vaccine. We will be

administering vaccines every weekday between now and August 6, 2021, with the target audience for weekday appointments Veterans who already have scheduled clinic appointments on those days. In addition to weekday vaccine appointments, VA Manila will have dedicated COVID-19 Mass Vaccine Clinics on the following Saturdays and Sundays:

- Saturday, July 17, 2021 – 12:00 – 15:00
- Sunday, July 18, 2021 – 08:00 – 15:00 ***Walk in Hours from 11A – 2P***
- Saturday, July 24, 2021 – 08:00 – 15:00
- Saturday, July 31, 2021 – 08:00 – 15:00
- Sunday, August 1, 2021 – 08:00 – 15:00
- Saturday, August 7, 2021 – 08:00 – 15:00

Please consider scheduling to come on a Saturday or Sunday. Usually, traffic conditions in the Metro Manila area are much more favorable on the weekends, and we are hoping to vaccinate between 300 – 400 Veterans each of the days above. However, if you would prefer a weekday appointment, we will do everything we can to accommodate your request for a vaccine on your specific day.

This upcoming weekend, on Sunday, July 18 from 11a-3p, and on Monday and Tuesday, July 19-20, 2021, VA Manila will also offer same day walk-in registration and vaccination. Please be certain to arrive no later than 2:00 PM if you wish to walk-in for a vaccination, to ensure we can complete the necessary paperwork and registration protocols.

How do I get scheduled for an appointment?

Getting an appointment for a COVID-19 Vaccine is easy – follow one of these 3 steps!

A dedicated phone line has been set up at the VA Manila Clinic to accommodate the high demand to schedule vaccine appointments. Veterans can contact the Manila Outpatient Clinic at +63-02-8550-3888, Press Option 2 for the Outpatient Clinic, then

press 3 for COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling. Please understand that there may be extended hold times over the next several days as we try to schedule as many Veterans as possible. The Clinic's phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8AM to 3PM. If you would like to be scheduled on one of the upcoming Saturday or Sunday mass vaccination clinic days, you can send a Secure Message to your primary care team via MyHealthVet with your preferred date and time. One of our staff members will get back to you to confirm your appointment.

You can also send an email with your preferred date and time to ManilaCOVIDVaccine@va.gov. Please include your last name, last 4 of your SSN, and your current address and phone number in your email so that we can confirm the information on file. VA Manila will send you a text message to confirm your appointment time, or an email reply if no cellular phone is on file.

What vaccine is available?

VA Manila will be providing the Johnson and Johnson (Janssen) vaccine to Veterans. A link to the Janssen / Johnson and Johnson Vaccine information page from the US Centers of Disease Control and Prevention is provided here. This vaccine confers protection with just one-dose, rather than the two dose regimens required by the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine. Using the Janssen / Johnson and Johnson vaccine will allow VA Manila to vaccinate twice as many Veterans and save many Veterans the time and expense of traveling to the Clinic twice to receive their vaccinations.

This is the only vaccine that will be available during the upcoming vaccine campaign. There will not be a choice between other US FDA approved vaccines, and VA Manila does not know if future vaccine shipments will be made available and what type of vaccines may be sent to the Clinic in the future.

All three US FDA approved vaccines are safe and effective against COVID-19 virus, and are considered highly effective against severe illness, hospitalization, and death from the Coronavirus. While some vaccines report higher levels of protection, the

three vaccines have not been studied head-to-head against one another, so it is not possible to make a comparison between the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson and Johnson vaccines. We strongly recommend all Veterans receive a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.

I have concerns about receiving the Johnson and Johnson Vaccine due to recent news report.

COVID-19 vaccine safety is a top priority for the federal government, and we take all reports of health problems following COVID-19 vaccination very seriously. CDC and FDA are monitoring reports of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) after receiving Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 Vaccine. GBS is a neurological disorder in which the body's immune system damages nerve cells, causing muscle weakness or in the most severe cases paralysis. Each year in the United States, an estimated 3,000 to 6,000 people develop GBS; it is typically triggered by a respiratory or gastrointestinal infection. Most people fully recover from GBS.

Reports of GBS after receipt of the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine in the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) are rare but do likely indicate a small possible risk of this side effect following this vaccine. Around 100 preliminary reports of GBS have been detected in VAERS after 12.8 million doses of J&J/Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine administered. These cases have largely been reported about two weeks after vaccination. This issue will be discussed as part of an upcoming CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) meeting.

In the United States, nearly all COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths are now occurring in unvaccinated people. The risk of severe adverse events after COVID-19 vaccination remains rare. Everyone eligible is recommended to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

NOTE:

RAO SUBIC BAY is assisting our Veterans who require transportation to get vaccinated. We are currently setting up vans for the 24 July vaccination. Please contact Jack at the RAO Subic at 222-2314 for appt scheduling and transportation. Thank you.