

# Faith and Spiritual Affairs Advisory Board Vaccination Statement

The year 2020 was one of the most challenging years in U.S. history, and 2021 has presented us challenges as well. The confluence of the economic recession, racial injustice, political unrest, and the COVID-19 pandemic has left many of us off balance and uncertain: however, Philadelphians have always been a community of hope and resilience. In addition to our existing tools such as wearing face coverings, practicing proper hand hygiene, and social distancing, the development of vaccines has now provided us with another tool in our toolbox to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Through an emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), we can now receive vaccines that have been studied and proven to have high efficacy. Scientist and public health officials assure us that these vaccines are safe and remarkably effective.

While this is positive news, there are some communities that have not automatically embraced the announcement of a mass inoculation program. Past racially biased and at times dangerous health policies and clinical experiments have targeted particularly vulnerable Black and Brown communities. Additionally, economic, and cultural inequities in the U.S. healthcare system that disproportionately harm Black and Brown communities are real reasons why people are skeptical and unsure about new vaccines.

Despite these disturbing realities, the faith leaders of the DBHIDS Faith and Spiritual Affairs Advisory Board recommend considering the vaccine as another viable option to mitigate the effects of COVID-19. This virus continues to impact our city, and communities of color continue to bear its disproportionate impact.

We encourage you to seek counsel from a trusted medical expert if you have questions or concerns and become familiar with the [City's phased approach to vaccine distribution](#). If you feel this choice is right for you please [register](#) to be notified when you are eligible to receive the vaccine. You can also visit the Philadelphia Department of Public Health website to view [frequently asked questions](#) and answers.

As you discern, continue to slow the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a face covering, maintaining social distance, and practicing proper hand-washing hygiene. As you care for yourself, you care for our city.

Sincerely,  
The [Faith and Spiritual Affairs](#) Advisory Board of DBHIDS

**“At first, I was nervous, because of the unknown mixed with my need to take the vaccine due to my other health issues. I have strong faith in God and as I prayed, I heard the message that the vaccine would be to my advantage.**

**I found out that the first people to receive the vaccine were the doctors and nurses giving the vaccine. That encouraged me to consult with my doctor who explained that it is safe. They encouraged me to get the vaccine”**

**Arthur Robinson**, House Manager  
Transformation to Recovery Hope House  
South Philly