

STUDENT IMPACT

Nevada Society of Health-System Pharmacists

TAKING ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC— STUDENTS VOLUNTEERING TO VACCINATE

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Candidate; Chris Hernandez, PharmD Candidate**

At the end of 2019 was the birth of the novel coronavirus. It was first identified with cases of pneumonia in Wuhan, China. Most of us were under the impression that this was just another news of some outbreak in a continent, miles away. However, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic in March 2020.

Numerous international and national events were canceled in fear

of rapid spread, including the Olympics 2020. Around April and May, we were in quarantine and this forced us to take up the online platform for work, school, communication, relationship, and festivities. Healthcare workers started to work tirelessly to provide for patients that are both affected by the coronavirus and other causes of hospitalization. The numbers only kept increasing when it came to mortality and daily affected cases. Big gatherings and holidays continued despite travel warnings and precautions. The second wave hit us around November and December. On December 11, 2020, the FDA granted emergency use authorization (EUA) to an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech. Healthcare workers were in the priority group to be eligible for the vaccinations.



Emotions ran high as frontline healthcare heroes got their COVID vaccines and social media was blooming with pictures of CDC vaccine cards, people getting, and giving vaccinations. It seemed that there was finally some hope and light at the end of the tunnel. We could start to envision going to back our normal times. A great appreciation to all the research scientists for

their achievement on not just inventing the vaccine but also getting it to us in a very short period of time. The vaccine couldn't have come at a better time, as we feared another wave of increased cases following the holidays.

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EUA authorized available vaccine

1. Pfizer-Biotech RNA Vaccine
2. Moderna RNA Vaccine

Currently under research

- AstraZeneca Recombinant Vector Vaccine
- Janssen (Johnson & Johnson's) Recombinant Vector Vaccine
- Novavax Virus-like Nanoparticle Vaccine

Being a resident during the pandemic is not how I imagined my residency, it has been hard to adapt to the volume of patients as well the emotions that come with these unprecedented times. I became a certified

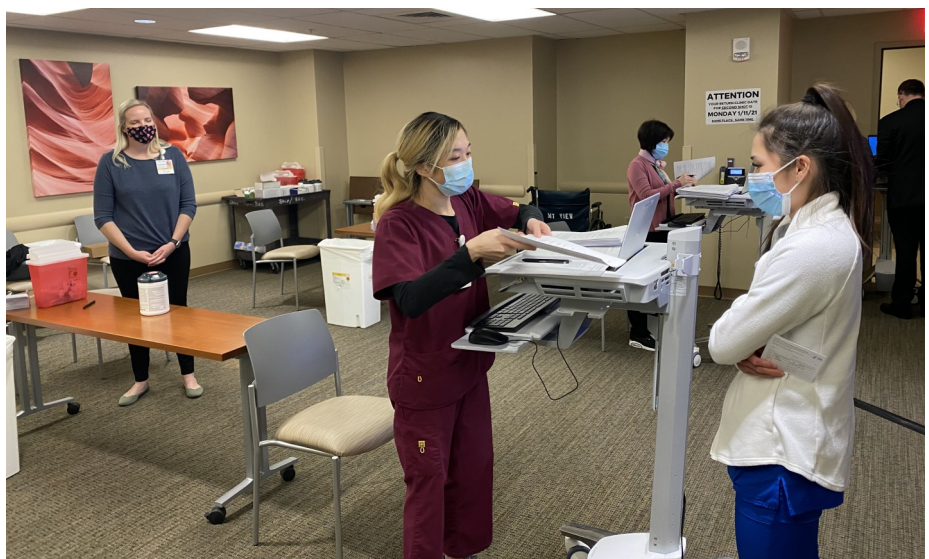


immunizer two years ago and now I am participating in such a historical



Priyanga Radjasegarane, PharmD

occurrence. I was emotional, as I thought about all the patients I have taken care of in the past few months and how there was nothing I could have done to save their lives. It was a cry of relief when I can finally do something with my own two hands to prevent these innocent lives from dying from this horrible virus. The virus may have won the first round, but in the end, we humans have the passion, determination, and perseverance to keep each other safe. I hope that everyone gets vaccinated soon, so we can eradicate this bad era of unfortunate circumstances forever.



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Becoming an online student during a global pandemic while earning my doctor of pharmacy degree was not how I originally imagined my university experience. The initial transition to an online platform was less than desirable and it felt as if the Sars-CoV-2 outbreak was hindering my experiences as a student both didactically and clinically. It wasn't until long, though, that I realized this pandemic would allow me the privilege to serve my community through vaccine clinics. I first volunteered to vaccinate healthcare professionals at the St. Rose Dominican Hospital, and I can say the experience was an honor. It was humbling to sit face to face with the heroes of our community and administer the vaccine that we have eagerly waited for.



Renna Sakka, PharmD Candidate

The experience went as smoothly as I could've hoped. The pharmacy was working diligently to prepare the vials for the clinic downstairs, and they were delivered to the clinic location as needed. I didn't see any undesired reactions to the vaccines, and the healthcare team seemed excited to receive their doses. I felt prepared to answer questions that were brought to my attention thanks to my background and education, and it was genuinely fun to be in a room of like-minded professionals who were all ready to end the pandemic.

I cannot emphasize enough what an honor it was to be a part of this history in the making. I look forward to future volunteer opportunities and can't wait for our collective efforts to return our communities to normal.



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Chris Hernandez, PharmD Candidate

My experience in helping with the Sars-CoV-2 (Covid-19) vaccinations at St. Rose Dominican, Sienna Campus was intrinsically rewarding and an honorable opportunity to support local front-line workers in the collective fight against the global pandemic. There was never a plan to start my Doctorate of Pharmacy program at Roseman University of Health Sciences amidst a global pandemic but here we are in the midst of it all. While we may not have individual control of the pandemic we do have control in how we react, act, and interact. When my class was informed of the opportunity to vaccinate at St. Rose Dominican (Sienna Campus) many of us saw it as an opportunity to help in any way we could. From the time I arrived to the time I left, the staff was helpful in their onboarding and making all of us feel valued. On countless occasions, both medical staff

and non-medical staff were thanking us for volunteering as we were thanking them for their service. Covid-19 will certainly have its place in history and I am grateful for St. Rose Dominican for allowing me a place on the right side of it.



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