

COVID-19 Vaccine: Sh

As these words are being written, over 150,000 people in the United States have taken a COVID-19 vaccine. Though that is a large number, it doesn't account for the many who pose a hesitancy towards this inoculation. The freedom of choice for taking this vaccine versus one's indebted social obligation has been an ongoing debate, even before the pandemic. It is a dilemma many face: juggling between the pros and the cons of having an obligatory vaccine. These unique times, more than ever, weigh between the essential choices of the health and freedom of either self or society.

Q&A with social studies teacher Mike Gottliebson



LYDIA HARGETT | NEWS EDITOR

Q: Why did you decide to get vaccinated, why was it important to you?

A: I wanted to get vaccinated for a few reasons. One, because vaccines are awesome and everyone should get them because infectious diseases are bad. Two, my wife is pregnant and won't be getting a vaccine in the near future, so if we go back face to face, I wanted to be assured I could add a level of safety for her. And three, my dad was recently diagnosed with a blood cancer and is immunocompromised, and a vaccine makes me feel safer being around him.

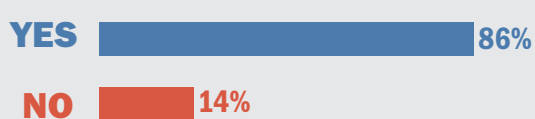
Q: Which vaccine did you choose to get and why?

A: I jumped on the first vaccine I could get and it happened to be the Moderna mRNA one.

Q: How did you feel after getting the vaccine?

A: I felt happy! And a little sore on my arm.

We asked Huron If you had the opportunity to get the vaccine, would you take it?



Data from @thehuronemery Instagram



ALLISON MI
COPY EDITOR

Vaccine PRO

The pandemic has trapped us in a dark tunnel of despair. It has brought a wave of devastation, drowning some more than others. For some of us, the greatest suffering we have had to face is no longer seeing our friends in-person. But for many others, the pain is much greater. They may have lost family members, been sick themselves or had their livelihoods drastically impacted for the worse. Thus, with a mandated vaccine, exempting those with religious and health reasons, we are helping not just ourselves, but also those who find themselves at the shorter end of the stick.

Let's take a stroll back to April 2020—what somber times. There was talk of a vaccine but nothing was resolute. When? What? How? We didn't know. When will this end? What do we do? How will we find a remedy? All of these questions produced disappointing shrugs.

The fortunate reality is that we *do* know now; we don't just have one vaccine, we have two: Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine. As of January 2021, we have an inoculation. In fact, as of this writing, Michigan Medicine alone has distributed over 31,000 vaccines. The light at the end of the tunnel beckons all of us.

The advantage to having mandatory vaccines — and vaccines is general — is obvious: your chances of getting COVID-19 will be severely reduced. According to CNN Health, however, only half of us are actually planning to take the vaccine. The reason for this is not financial, since the vaccine is free to everyone. The cause is a lack of trust; it's a fear that the vaccine was made in too much of a rush to be credible. Is there any evidence for this claim?

What many people don't realize is that the Pfizer and Moderna products we see today

are a culmination of over a decade of science and discoveries. Our COVID-19 vaccines piggyback off of mRNA technology, which has been in the works for over ten years. In other words, the new offerings are safe and vetted. An analogy would be how schools moved into a virtual setting quite quickly. They could do this because the Internet was already known and effective.

Another concern people have are the side effects. For the COVID-19 vaccine, they include muscle soreness from the shot, fatigue, headache, chills and a fever, which are all temporary. However, these side effects are the same as for the flu vaccine—an annual vaccine required by many jobs and schools. According to Michigan Medicine, reactions to the two COVID-19 vaccines are 100 times less common than those of penicillin. In other words, if you have no qualms about getting a

flu vaccine, you should have no objections to protecting yourself from COVID-19.

An important point to realize is that no matter how effective or great a vaccine is, if no one takes it, it may as well not have been made. Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Diseases, Dr. Anthony Fauci, estimated that 70 to 85 percent of the population will have to take the vaccine to reach herd immunity, which is when a large enough percentage of the population will be immune to COVID-19, resulting in an unlikely spread of the disease.

If there is a mandatory vaccine, we can reach herd immunity sooner, and thus the pandemic can end sooner. A common rebuttal is that we all have the right to freedom.

But there comes a time when we must draw a line when one person's freedom is a hindrance to many others' lives. It's analogous to someone freely polluting a lake, and harming the health and well-being of those around them as a result. As much as taking the COVID-19 vaccine is a favor for yourself, it's a social responsibility you owe to your community.

Many people live in the pandemic with a considerable luxury they often take for granted.

They have food on the table at least three times a day in bountiful amounts, but there are as many people out there — so many people — drowning in this pandemic, who can't afford the basics of survival and need out. Immediately.

So, when you take the vaccine, you are helping those whose struggles extend beyond not seeing their friends each day. You are protecting those who can't take the vaccine due to health concerns. You are helping the students who are struggling in online school. You are helping the mom who got laid off last April, desperately trying to make ends meet to have food on the table for her children. When you take the vaccine, you are helping us all. You are being selfless. Can you do that for us?



Could it be mandatory?

Vaccine Con



GABRIELA DIMOVA
STAFF WRITER

COVID-19 vaccines are finally available. But while some people are busy continually refreshing their web browser to try to find availability, there are others who are not interested in taking the shot. What needs to be addressed is whether or not the vaccine should be mandated. I believe it should not.

No one has seen the long term effects of the current COVID-19 shot yet. So, how do we test for long term effects? We can't. Possible side effects of the vaccine are still unknown. I believe people have the right to wait before injecting themselves with something authorized by the government.

People want to be able to choose what situation they put themselves in. But these choices are different in each state. People can sit shoulder to shoulder with a stranger for a whole flight, but can't dine at a local restaurant when everyone is socially distanced in Michigan. We

can all go to

GRAPHIC BY BRIDGIT JUNG

Walmart and touch

all the items in the store, but can't go to a movie theater. However, once you travel to Ohio, all of sudden there is "no COVID-19" and now you can eat in restaurants. Mixed messages make it hard to add up what the nation is doing. Scientifically, there is a high survival rate for those under the age of 55 and the way the deaths are being miscounted also leaves many people questioning how we have handled COVID-19. This polarized attitude shows why people should be able to choose if they want the vaccine or not. The people can make their own

choices.

Another reason why individuals should have the choice to have the COVID-19 vaccine is because they stand for medical freedom. The same way people refuse the flu shot is the same way people want to be allowed to refuse a COVID-19 vaccine. Whether it be for religious reasons or people wanting to know more about it.

Almost half of Americans, 42 percent, said they wouldn't get a free vaccine created by the government according to a Gallup survey in late October. The federal government cannot make a nationwide vaccine mandate. They have limited power expressly spelled out in the constitution; the rest belongs to the states. The federal government has some ways to get people to vaccinate, imposing its condition of getting a passport, for example. Though the national level government cannot declare a mandate, the states do have the authority to do so. The Supreme Court said that states can enforce the vaccine under their police powers, which is under the Constitution. Even though this law is 115 years old, states can take action for the public's health.

When looking at schools slowly opening up across the nation, a vaccine mandate has slipped through parents' minds. Districts like Ann Arbor Public Schools, is one of those employers who will not order the vaccine on it's staff. The staff is allowed to choose. However, the district has made it clear that before we return, the vaccine would need to be accessible to staff to make that choice.

Rejecting the vaccine now does not mean rejecting the vaccine forever. While some are bragging about this vaccine being rushed and emergency FDA approvals, others are finding this discomforting. It's as if we're driving to the hospital but we're running every red light on the way home. We may need a vaccine but some would rather be cautious about it. If you want to take the vaccine, by all means, you're in your medical freedom to do so, but don't shame others who won't be participating in the COVID-19 vaccines.

The Timeline

★ Future dates are tentative

