

Mark: We've also learned a senior living facility in Methuen has enrolled in the CDCs National COVID-19 Vaccine Program. Boston 25 News reporter, Christine McCarthy, is standing by live. Christine, does this mean they will be among the first to get the vaccine?

Christine McCar...: Yeah, Mark. That's exactly the plan. You know, when you house and protect seniors, you have to take COVID-19 very seriously, and this local senior living facility is trying to make sure that as soon as a vaccine is available to the public, they get it right away.

Richard Govoni: [00:00:30] Well, I think everyone's been looking forward to the day that a vaccination is announced.

Christine McCar...: When a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available to the public, the plan is for seniors at The Woods at Merrimack Retirement Community in Methuen to be among the first to receive it, Executive Director, Richard Govoni, tells Boston 25 News.

Richard Govoni: The goal was to make sure that we were right at the front of the line to be able to provide this for our residents and families.

Christine McCar...: Oregon-based Sunshine Retirement Living tells us its Methuen facility was among the first local senior living communities to sign up for the CDCs free vaccination program. [00:01:00] They've contracted with CVS to vaccinate staff and residents who choose to do so on site. Over the last few days as drug makers Pfizer and Moderna announced early success in their vaccine trials, staff have become eager to get vaccinated, Govoni says. Management will soon inform residents of the opportunity.

Richard Govoni: I think relief. I think a lot of people would feel that way, that we're all relieved that there's probably light at the end of the tunnel now.

Christine McCar...: The Woods at Merrimack opened as the coronavirus pandemic was first ramping up in February. Now with more than 40 residents practicing [00:01:30] social distancing, even while enjoying their daily activities and socializing, the facility is proud to say the virus hasn't entered their especially vulnerable community.

Richard Govoni: We've been COVID-free since the very beginning, when we first opened our doors.

Christine McCar...: Management knows just one case could be tragic for the community. That's why protecting seniors against the virus with the vaccine whenever it's available, while allowing them to have some normalcy avoiding the isolation many seniors are experiencing right now, is key to success here.

Richard Govoni: [00:02:00] With this population it's so important. The more they can socially stimulate and be active, the better off they are.

Christine McCar...

Because this is a new facility, there's still room for more residents to move in, but I'm told having that extra space right now, room to socially distance is never a bad thing. Live in Methuen, Christine McCarthy, Boston 25 News.