



## **MALTA COLLEGE OF FAMILY DOCTORS**

127, The Professional Centre,  
Sliema Road, Gzira MALTA (Europe)  
Email: [contact@mcfd.org.mt](mailto:contact@mcfd.org.mt)  
Website: <http://www.mcfd.org.mt>

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#### **Promoting civic responsibility in the public response to vaccination**

The Malta College of Family Doctors (MCFD) is a Voluntary Organisation (VO/0973) that strives to improve the academic and clinical performance of family doctors (known as “it-tobba tal-familja” or “general practitioners”) and the standards of primary health care in our country.

The MCFD applauds how the vast majority of citizens are with self-discipline and personal sacrifice following the instructions and recommendations of the medical community spearheaded by the Superintendence of Public Health to control the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. On the other hand, it is disappointed that the same entities who made mistakes last year have repeated the same mistakes this year and the enforcement agencies are not effective.

The MCFD also applauds the substantial voluntary uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine that reflects the nationwide efforts, through public clinics and private family doctors, to vaccinate as many people as possible. It is disheartening that our country cannot set a target of herd immunity, made up of the combined vaccinees and those with natural immunity from prior COVID-19 infection, as the official statistics for the population count are known to be an underestimate because of EU and non-EU residents residing but not registered in our country. Achieving herd immunity would allow relaxation of restrictive measures, which do have a considerable impact on the economy and people’s lives.

The MCFD encourages those elderly who are not yet vaccinated to come forwards as the vaccine is highly effective in this age group to prevent hospitalization and death. The MCFD encourages parents to seek the appropriate medical advice when it comes to deciding whether to vaccinate their children. Likewise pregnant women should seek medical advice when it comes to decide whether to take the vaccination or not. The MCFD points out that some cannot take the vaccine for medical reasons and calls for due attention by others in their respect.

On the other hand, the MCFD is concerned by some public response to people who are getting infected with COVID-19, despite being vaccinated. It is unfair when people treat others who become infected in derogatory terms. MCFD points out that vaccination is meant to decrease the likelihood of having serious COVID with subsequent hospitalization and death but does not mean that a vaccinee cannot become infected with a COVID-19 variant. The MCFD reminds that both those vaccinated and unvaccinated can still transmit COVID-19 whereas naturally immune people almost never transmit COVID-19. Hopefully we are scientifically closer to having and using tests of actual COVID-19 immunity rather than the PCR test used to date.

The MCFD understands why some private entities are introducing measures that distinguish between employees who are and are not vaccinated in order to protect production lines and delivery of the end product but is concerned that this may cause a degree of social upheaval at the

workplace and hence needs to be tackled with care. The organization does not understand why entities, mostly public, have pulled the plug from the environmentally- and family-friendly measure of their employees working from home wherever and whenever possible.

Finally, the MCFD reminds that it had published a 'Self-Care' guide about influenza, common cold and COVID-19 for the general public. Self-care means treating mild illnesses at home, using rest, nutrition, and sometimes over-the-counter medicines. The documents can be viewed and downloaded at the links: <https://mcfcd.org.mt/generalpublic/selfcare>