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**Contact:**

Rebecca Smith

VP – Strategic Communications

785-424-4224

[Rebecca.A.Smith@lmh.org](mailto:Rebecca.A.Smith@lmh.org)

## **LMH Health reports vaccine waste due to process error**

**LAWRENCE** – Nearly 600 doses of the Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccine have been lost during a transfer between Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health (LDCPH) and LMH Health.

LDCPH received 570 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine on March 3 in a refrigerated state and transferred them to LMH Health on Wednesday, March 10 at 1:45 p.m. Because vaccines are typically delivered to LMH Health while still frozen, the standard process is to place them into a freezer at the hospital until they are ready for distribution. LMH Health followed this procedure upon receipt of the Johnson & Johnson vaccines, not realizing they were already thawed.

“When we discovered the vaccines had been delivered to the hospital in a refrigerated state, LMH Health immediately reached out to Johnson & Johnson for guidance,” said Brian Bradfield, LMH Health associate vice president of ancillary services. “The company advised these doses will have to be discarded. At Johnson & Johnson’s request, we have contacted McKesson, who is overseeing distribution. McKesson referred us our state and local health department to coordinate replacement doses.”

LMH Health President & CEO Russ Johnson said that while processes are in place to prevent vaccine waste, we failed in this case. As such, the vaccination team is working together to quickly review and refine these processes to prevent future errors.

“Although this is a small percentage of the overall vaccines that the county has received, we know it is not insignificant—this is a heart wrenching situation for our hospital, our Phase 2 community members and our Unified Command partners,” Johnson said. “We owe it to our community and to the many volunteers and staff who pour their hearts into the vaccination effort to see this through in a manner that is both efficient and effective. We have had a nearly flawless process to date and we will determine where our processes failed and fix them. What we learn will be shared with our community partners to prevent issues down the road.”

Dan Partridge, Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health Director, said LMH Health has been a vital partner in the massive, county-wide vaccination effort that has been led by Unified Command.

“We had a single process that deviated from the norm,” said Partridge. “This is a good reminder for all Unified Command partners to check and double check their doses during transfer. We will follow that process going forward, as we navigate this bump in the road.”

LMH Health and LDCPH are working to reschedule vaccine appointments, likely at the joint clinic planned at the fairgrounds on Wednesday.