

Behind the Scenes



Executive Director's Report

The Access Board committees met on January 11, 2021 and addressed the following:

- > The Performance Monitoring committee took action on the award for the Southern Region service provider contract as well as an extension of a contract for travel training.
- > The Planning and Development committee took action on approving changes to Access' accounts payable process. The committee also reviewed changes to the Antelope Valley service provider RFP and an overview of Access' Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program. Finally, they received an update on the FY21 budget and the proposed FY22 budget.
- > The External/Stakeholder Relations committee took action on approving a video production services contract. The committee also heard legislative updates from Access' federal and state lobbyists.

The next full meeting of the Board of Directors will be on February 22, 2021.

Andre Colaiace
Executive Director

access

Giving it a shot: My Covid-19 clinical trial experience



**PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR
ALEX CHRISMAN**

My daily work in the virtual Emergency Operations Center of Access involves monitoring and responding to the pandemic. I have never doubted its seriousness or impact on our world. I have family members who I really don't want to get this disease, because of their pre-existing conditions. Even in my relative youth of 38 years old, I know that it may not be a walk in the park for me either if I were

to contract the virus. I also would not want to spread it. Because of these factors, and my faith in science, I have wanted to get vaccinated, but not before others who need it more than I.

One day I came across news of a Covid-19 vaccine trial occurring in Anaheim, California, not too far from where I live. I had never participated in medical research before and after doing some preliminary investigation of the process and the facility, Anaheim Clinical Trials, I decided it was worth checking out.

The vaccine, from the pharmaceutical firm NovaVax, needs to be tested on 30,000 people in Phase 3 trials before it can be released to the public. I would essentially be participating in a science experiment.

If successful, NovaVax's vaccine would be the fifth weapon in our fight against COVID-19. In order to vaccinate as many people as possible, and in a bit of a departure from the norm, two out of three study participants would get the vaccine, while another third would get a placebo, which contains a harmless substance, but is not the vaccine and would not provide protection. That gave me a 66% chance of getting vaccinated potentially months before I otherwise would. I am a fan of Las Vegas, and I liked those odds. There would be two shots, 21 days apart.

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On the morning of January 12th, I arrived at 8am and was finished by 11:15am. I reviewed the consent forms, signed paperwork, had my blood drawn, took a Covid-19 test (thankfully self-administered; I was not looking forward to this) and then got down to the moment of truth. The doctor leading the study, called the investigator, was in the building. He actually interviewed me and dictated to a recorder. I had asked him what the worst side effect was in the roughly 100 people who had gotten the vaccine at the facility previously; he replied a sore arm and shared that nobody went to the emergency room.

All these months, living what through could be called a bit of a nightmare and an unspeakable tragedy, I finally had a chance to make a difference in this fight beyond my work at Access. I looked at the syringe, which looked just like a flu shot, and wondered if the vaccine, which once seemed impossible to achieve, was in there. It went into my arm like butter and barely pinched.

Back in the recovery area, where I had to wait for 30 minutes, I carefully watched my arm to see if there was a reaction. Never before in my life have I wanted there to be side effects. Side effects would likely confirm I got the vaccine. After a few minutes, my right arm started to swell slightly at the injection site, just like a flu shot. This was a good sign; later I got a strange earache, which is uncommon for me. I think there is a good chance I got it. Nevertheless, I will keep social distancing and wearing my mask, to keep myself, loved ones, and society safe. Even if I did not get the vaccine, I can tell my two kids that during this time of crisis, their dad did something. It was small, and pales in comparison to what others have done but in a world of so much uncertainty, it feels good; it feels right. I'll take it.

Alex Chrisman
Project Administrator

A need to feed: Access drivers deliver food to the community



**INSULATED BAGS PROTECT
THE FOOD ON ITS WAY TO
OUR VETERANS.**

This past November, Access entered into a partnership with the Jewish War Veterans Post 680 veteran's organization to add the Kevin Dobson Memorial Food to Life Program as Access' seventh meal distribution program.

The Food to Life program, which was renamed in honor of Army veteran and prolific television actor Kevin Dobson who passed away in September 2020, assists veterans and those in need by providing a week's worth of meals to each recipient. Three times a week, large cooler bags filled with hundreds of handmade meals are picked up from a private gourmet kitchen located in Northridge by MV Transportation and delivered to the Inglewood U.S. Vets Building and the American Legion in Midway City in Orange County.

To date, Access has delivered over 39,000 Food to Life meals with plans to expand the program to two additional drop off locations in downtown Los Angeles in the coming weeks. This expansion will cast a wider net and ensure more recipients receive meals during this challenging time. Access looks forward to a continued partnership with this veterans organization and, most importantly, supporting the community through this ongoing pandemic.

Jessica Volanos
Senior Operations Service Monitor