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Inside the scandal that swept Chicago's Austin community

Over the past few weeks, the Loretto Hospital in Chicago's Austin community has been a topic of conversation. CEO George Miller and COO Dr. Anosh Ahmed were reprimanded for allowing some "well-connected" members of society to skip the vaccination line at the hospital.

As a result, [the City of Chicago ceased supplying coronavirus vaccines to Loretto hospital](#). Dr. Allison Arwady, Chief of Chicago's health department, reassured the public that investigations had commenced regarding high level executives skipping the vaccine line. Arwady expressed concerns regarding the actions of the two Loretto Hospital executives. She claimed that Loretto Hospital no longer had the community's trust and therefore did not deserve to receive the coronavirus vaccines.

On Friday, Arwady spoke to the [media](#): "[T]he biggest concern here is that they were vaccinating people, first and foremost, who were not eligible for the phase."

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Austin is a protected neighborhood in Chicago since it is among the most affected neighborhoods by COVID-19. This makes the hospital's actions even more serious. Without sharing details, the Loretto hospital board members have assured that the two executives have been dealt with.

[According to a WBEZ report](#), Loretto offered COVID-19 vaccinations to ineligible Cook County Judges.

Loretto hospital spokespeople claimed that despite the eligibility information being available to the public through Chicago's Health Department, the officials at Loretto hospital found it a confusing task differentiating between who was eligible and who wasn't.

Arwady also responded to the rumor from a Cook County courts spokesperson that the city was throwing away vaccines. Arwady assured the media and the public that not a single vaccine was being thrown out. Only hours after Arwady's Friday comments to the press, there was a [Facebook post](#) by Loretto hospital urging people in Chicago to come and receive vaccinations at the hospital before they expired at 5:30 pm.

While the well-connected friends of executives were skipping lines to receive vaccinations, the eligible residents of Austin, most of them poor or black, were spending hours on the line to receive vaccinations because their home areas were high-risk zones. Instead, the two Loretto hospital executives decided to give vaccines to ineligible people.

What this created was an inconvenience. According to [The Triibe](#) reporter Matt Harvey, "a minor inconvenience is all it takes to discourage a person with little-to-no familiarity with online forms such as Zocdoc from registering for the vaccine."

Furthermore, the impact on hard-hit, lower income, Black Austin community is that they are left without a vaccine supply based on actions of The Loretto Hospital executives.

Although more people are able to get vaccinated soon, the vaccine rollout has been botchy in some communities, further escalating the hardships these communities face. ~R



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