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IREM President's message: Keeping residents safe during this pandemic

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Melissa Fish-Crane

As property managers, we are in a unique position to help our residents – and especially our low-income residents, our residents who need some extra assistance, and our residents who live in underserved communities – by connecting them with the resources they need to live better lives. In no instance has this been more evident than over the last year, and in all our property managers are doing to keep their residents safe during this pandemic, and to help guide them through, by connecting them with vaccine access resources and, in some cases, hosting vaccine clinics specifically for residents.

In fact, this is something that my organization – Peabody Properties – has been doing since mid-January. We're participating in the new CDC Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program, which has allowed us to offer the COVID vaccination clinics to our 52 senior affordable housing communities throughout greater Boston.

The Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care (LTC) Program provides end-to-end management of the COVID-19 vaccination process, including cold chain management, on-site vaccinations, and fulfillment of reporting requirements, to facilitate safe vaccination for residents of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and affordable senior housing developments, while reducing the burden on LTC facilities and jurisdictional health departments.

Additionally, we're partnering with community health centers as well to help augment equity in vaccine access. Late last month, we partnered with Whittier Street Health Center to bring a vaccine clinic onsite to Roxse Homes in Roxbury. This clinic was not only a significant step in our efforts to ensure residents in all of our communities have vaccine access, but also aligns importantly with the Governor's recently announced Targeted Outreach Initiative, to support vaccination in traditionally underserved communities. We look forward to pursuing more partnerships like this one as we continue to creatively and collaboratively work for solutions to our toughest challenges.

I know that many of you have faced similar circumstances, and I encourage you to share your own

stories of creativity and collaboration, so that we might all learn from each other and support one another.

Although we are a real estate organization, we can't forget that we are just as much a people organization. As the largest chapter of IREM, and as a largely urban and suburban chapter, we bear witness to some of the hardest challenges facing residents throughout the country. But it is precisely the education, resources, and network offered by IREM that help us to navigate these challenges more effectively, and that help us provide the appropriate support to make our residents' lives a little bit – and sometimes a lot – better.

As we come to the end of the first quarter of the new year, take a moment to reflect on that, and challenge yourself to think about how you can better yourself professionally to make an even greater impact on others. We have gone through so much over the last year, but we emerge stronger, more resilient, and with a greater sense of purpose to make our communities all that a home should be.

Melissa Fish-Crane is the 2021 president of IREM Boston and principal & COO at the Peabody Properties.

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