

JUST SAYIN'

Doctor-patient collaboration works

While the physician who wrote a letter stated that patients' surnames are not to be used due to HIPAA regulations, "especially in reception areas," in the privacy of the exam room providers need to confirm the full name and date of birth of the new patient in front of him or her ["Physicians are not intending disrespect," Just Sayin', June 12].

It then behooves the provider to ask the patient how he or she prefers to be addressed.

The doctor writing to defend physicians' intentions in using a patient's first name stated that his physicians refer to him by his first name and that it is "perfectly acceptable" to him.

The key here is that the use of his first name was acceptable to him. Another doctor might have another preference. Indeed, all deserve to be treated with respect.

Spending a moment verifying a patient's identity and clarifying what name and title the patient prefers is best practice and represents the beginning of a collaborative doctor-patient relationship.

—DEBRA SMITH, SETAUKET

■ **JUST SAYIN'** invites comment about public policy issues you're not seeing in Newsday. Send letters of up to 200 words to letters@newsday.com, with "Just Sayin'" in the subject line. Include name, address, phone numbers. Or write Newsday Opinion, 6 Corporate Center Drive, Melville, NY 11747. Letters will be edited, become property of Newsday and may be republished in all media.

GUEST ESSAY

Will Broadway fill up again?

Theater lovers will need to feel safe if shows are to re-open at full capacity

BY LEIDA SNOW

Bruce Springsteen is coming back to Broadway June 26, more than two dozen shows have announced starting dates, and Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo has lifted most virus restrictions. But many people don't feel safe, and confusing announcements from the Centers for Disease Control, health experts and the governor aren't helping.

The CDC says people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 can skip the masks. Cuomo has lifted virtually all coronavirus restrictions for restaurants and other industries. But Broadway safety guidelines haven't yet been announced.

Overall, New York has an impressive vaccination rate, but significant areas of the city are lagging. At the same time, if the city, state or federal government mandated shots, there might be an uproar from anti-vaxxers.

Reports are that owners of the 41 Broadway theaters have upgraded their ventilation systems and brought their houses into current protocol compliance. Is there a way to verify that for the public?

Broadway industry leaders aren't saying whether you will have to prove vaccination, which leaves audiences in the dark before the shows start. It appears that the three main Broadway theater owners — Shubert, Jujamcyn, and Nederlander — will have to decide whether particular cast, crew

and audience members have to be vaccinated.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has said companies can require vaccination from their employees, but there is a list of legal considerations, including religious and health exceptions. What guarantee is there that everyone has been vaccinated, including the ushers, staff and those onstage and backstage? If theaters require audiences to be vaccinated, what guarantee is there that proof documents won't be faked?

Theaters are notoriously crowded, and plans are for opening at full capacity, with no social distancing. As of this writing, producers and theater owners have not come to agreements with the 14 Broadway unions, though they have agreed on health protocols for touring shows. Even if all the producers and union members are comfortable, nobody knows whether there will be enough audience members willing to sit, masked or unmasked, close to strangers.

Will there be another COVID spike in New York? Some health experts say that the fuller re-openings may make the unvaccinated complacent and pave the way for another virus surge.

"Hamilton," "The Lion King" and "Wicked" have announced September 14 as their opening nights. Other major productions are planning to raise their curtains sooner. Some fans are ready. Others are not.



INVISION/AP / GREG ALLEN

Guests at Bruce Springsteen's June 26 return to Broadway at the St. James Theater will have to show proof of vaccination.

Broadway's planned reopening is exciting and scary. Theater lovers desperately want the upcoming productions to succeed, but steps need to be taken to help them feel secure enough to buy tickets and see the shows.

The messaging emphasis needs to change. The risks need to be put in perspective. Now that so many have been vaccinated, the slower rate of inoculation is to be expected. There needs to be more positivity about the continuing climb in the number of those protected, and ongoing communication about the vaccines' effectiveness. Growing population acceptance across the country can change perceptions of the risk. Psychologists

point out that positive reinforcement can be more powerful than fear as a way to motivate healthy behavior.

Producers should also take note: The Boss' star power for "Springsteen on Broadway" is expected to fill the St. James Theater, which will require guests to prove they've received FDA-approved vaccinations.

Broadway fans may have their doubts, but more headlines may help them break through.

■ **THIS GUEST ESSAY** reflects



the views of journalist Leida Snow, who writes frequently about the theater.

FROM THE POINT

Breaking bread to raise bread with a side of unity

Long Island will soon have its own Al Smith dinner, a political gathering and social event extraordinaire to foster bipartisanship and raise money for a local charity.

Unlike the storied Smith dinner, a white tie and ballgown event at the Waldorf Astoria

hosted each year by the Archdiocese of New York leader, the high priests of the "Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt Dinner" will be Nassau County Republican and Democratic party chairs Joe Cairo and Jay Jacobs.

The pair hope to sell 1,200 tickets, and are seeking big

names for the event on Dec. 13, at the Crest Hollow Country Club in Woodbury.

"It's a great idea," said Cairo. The two men believe political parties can work together for the common good. In interviews with The Point, both decried the current rancor in

politics and were searching for a way to model behavior of an earlier time — a feeling evidenced in their conversations as each sought to give the other credit for the idea, which was nurtured along at other dinners the two have routinely. "Coming together is the only

way forward because the country can't go on like this," said Jacobs.

— Rita Ciolli

This excerpt originally appeared in *The Point*, the daily email newsletter of the editorial board. Sign up at newsday.com/ThePoint.