

# UW Health: Hope on the mind of first vaccinated healthcare worker after one year of COVID-19 vaccines

Posted on Tuesday, Dec 14, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

MADISON, Wis. – Dec. 14, 2020, is a day Tina Schubert will remember for the rest of her life.

That day at University Hospital, Schubert sat in the newly erected employee vaccine clinic on a typical gray office chair waiting anxiously to the right of Megan LeClair-Netzel, then manager, Employee Health Services, UW Health, as LeClair-Netzel prepared the shot. A crowd of people, photographers and those next in line for a dose waited with anticipation for the moment vaccination against the SARS-CoV-2 virus would begin in Wisconsin.

Once the dose was given, Schubert raised her arm in excitement and joy, signaling the start of a possible end to the COVID-19 pandemic. A year later, the pandemic rages, but there is still hope that the vaccines are doing the good they promised, according to Schubert, a respiratory therapist at UW Health.

“We have learned so much more about the virus and treatments for it; I am not as scared as I was a year ago of this ‘unknown’ virus,” she said.

Vaccines have allowed schools to return to in-person learning, families and friends have been able to be together again and the medical community has learned so much more about the virus and treatments for it, which all give her hope, she said.

“Being the first to receive the vaccine was so important for me because I could set an example for my daughter and the community – especially those who look like me

- that the vaccine is safe and I am fine," she said.

The COVID-19 vaccines' development was an amazing result of collaboration that allowed the vaccines to be created and administered with never-before-seen speed combined with strong safety precautions that were taken, according to Dr. Jeff Pothof, chief quality officer, UW Health.

"It was a big day; it was more than just getting a shot in the arm, but looking back at the past year, seeing how much work went into making sure the vaccines were available quickly in the United States and knowing the tables had turned and knowing we would eventually be able to beat this pandemic," he said.

New variants of the virus are of concern, but the current vaccines have proven effective against the delta variant and appear to offer some protection against the new omicron variant, while drug makers are already reviewing the effectiveness of boosters on the variant and focused on omicron-specific vaccines, he said.

"These vaccines, even in the age of the delta variant, are very good at doing what any vaccine is designed to do, and that's to prevent severe disease and death," Pothof said. "But the icing on the cake is they also have the ability to prevent you from getting sick in the first place."

Recorded interviews with Schubert and Pothof are also available.