

To the Editor:

Let's be clear about one thing: it would be nice if there were some facts to back up all the indignation and name calling, but I don't hear one shred of evidence that anyone at Howes House has been irresponsible or is putting any one of us at risk.

Since when does refusing to compromise a co-worker's right to privacy translate to irresponsible behavior? Is there any actual proof that anyone working for Howes House is NOT vaccinated?? Rumors to the contrary, all that is known is that the director, Joyce Albertine, has not answered the question because she believes the HIPAA laws prohibit her from doing so.

Public safety should always come first. I believe that is what is going on at Howes House. Howes House is a public building. The staff can not legally require vaccination certificates or even ask people entering the building if they have been vaccinated. Since they can not restrict who comes in the door, they are erring on the side of caution, per public health protocols. Quite right!

But why single out Howes House? Howes House is not the only place requiring masks and distancing. In case you haven't noticed, masks and distancing are the public policy for ALL public buildings including all of the Libraries, Town Halls, Post Offices, and other public facilities. Is anyone not going into their Library or the Post Office because you have to wear a mask and they are restricting the number of people who can be inside at one time?

I have known the women who work at Howes House for a number of years. They are highly educated professionals who do this work because they care about people and communities. I trust them to be responsible and to put public safety first. I would bet that in fact they ARE all vaccinated. But again, that is speculation.

What I do know is that Joyce Albertine is a kind, compassionate, hard working woman who has helped more people on this Island than you can imagine. And she does not deserve to be treated this way.

Sincerely,  
Ellen T. Miller, Vineyard Haven