

# Orlando Sentinel

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



Dr. Salma Elfaki of Nona Pediatric Center works at her office in Orlando in February. Elfaki is leading the state's only COVID-19 Moderna vaccine clinical trial site for children, one of only 25 sites across the U.S. **JOE BURBANK/ORLANDO SENTINEL**

## Orlando clinical trial tests vaccine in teens

### Development considered critical for herd immunity

**By Kate Santich**  
Orlando Sentinel

When Dr. Salma Elfaki signed on to lead Moderna's only COVID vaccine trial for teens in Florida, the Lake Nona pediatrician thought she might have trouble finding kids — or parents — willing to participate.

The concern didn't last long. "Even before the news really got out, over 400 patients enlisted," she said. "It has been surreal."

Recruits first emerged from the fami-

lies of fellow physicians and other health professionals who understood the ravages of the virus and the vaccine's development. Then came middle- and high-school devotees of science and technology.

Some wanted to help society reclaim a sense of normalcy. Others were kids with health problems that made them more vulnerable to COVID-19 complications. And still others were from Black and Hispanic families who sought to ensure racial equity.

"Different people had different reasons, but they all were excited to become sort

#### Inside

- Columns: COVID-19, one year later.
- **Opinion, Page 10**
- Where to get the vaccine. **Page 16**
- Vaccine Q&A: Who is eligible and other questions. **Local & State, Page 1**

of pioneers in the field, if you will," Elfaki said. "They wanted to be part of history."

The founder of Nona Pediatric Center, Elfaki is still running her own practice

**Turn to Trial, Page 16**

To view the full article, click [here](#).