

From: CT Department of Public Health <noreply-dphimmunizations@ct.gov>

Sent: Monday, February 22, 2021 12:05 PM

To:

Subject: CoVP Provider Bulletin, Week of February 22, 2021



Connecticut

Department of Public Health

Dear Connecticut COVID-19 Vaccine Providers,

This bulletin is sent to key contacts at provider organizations administering COVID-19 vaccine. Please share it with others in your organization who may benefit from the update. Note that all of our communications are archived on our [web site](#).

Next Eligibility Roll-Out: March 1

Overview

Today at 4pm, Governor Lamont will announce that eligibility for COVID 19 vaccine will continue to be based primarily on age.

Effective March 1, individuals aged 55-64 who live or work in Connecticut will be eligible to schedule appointments and receive a COVID-19 vaccine. In addition, with the goal of fully re-opening schools, all Connecticut pre-K - Grade 12 educators and support staff as well as licensed childcare professionals living or working in the state will also be eligible. Our goal is for all education and childcare workers who wish to be vaccinated to receive a first dose in the month of March.

The continued use of age-based eligibility is designed to simplify the scheduling and administration of COVID 19 vaccines for both recipients and providers alike. As the Department of Public Health sought to operationalize a process based on workforce status as well as medical conditions, the complexity and challenges of such a process became clear. Complex processes often further marginalize vulnerable communities. We hope that a simpler approach will support a more equitable distribution of COVID 19 vaccine.

Healthcare personnel, congregate setting staff and residents, and individuals 65+ will of course remain eligible for COVID 19 vaccine. *If you have not already, please ensure that you report any congregate settings that you have vaccinated in your next order form, or separately by email to Kathryn.rock-burns@ct.gov.*

In addition, with this next phase of eligibility DPH will be setting specific numerical targets for providing appointments to those who live in high SVI communities. Further details on this program will be provided in a separate bulletin.

Appointment Scheduling for Current Phase

Please make a concerted effort to continue outreach to individuals 75+ and 65+ who have not yet received a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. In order to offer vaccine to individuals in these eligibility phases, providers may extend their schedules from March 14 to March 21 for first doses. Only those individuals in 1A, 65+, and congregate facility staff and residents may schedule at this time. Individuals 55-64 cannot schedule until March 1.

Scheduling and Outreach for Next Phase

Effective March 1, providers should adjust their web portals, call centers, and other scheduling mechanisms to reflect age 55+ eligibility along with educators and childcare professionals. Appointment schedules may be extended to April 8 on this date to accommodate the anticipated demand. Education and childcare professionals should receive their first dose by March 31. Please see additional guidance for eligibility.

The DPH team will be working with employer coordinators in schools and childcare facilities to ensure VAMS lists are accurate and correctly uploaded for the March 1 implementation. In addition, some school districts may work directly with local health departments or other providers to arrange for closed PODS.

Local and regional planning with health directors and school leadership is encouraged to help coordinate vaccinations for education and childcare sectors.

Careful consideration should be provided to ensure robust and equitable scheduling access for this next eligibility phase. Scheduling should include telephone, web-based, and walk-in options that provide multi-lingual supports. Education and childcare professionals should be encouraged to utilize closed clinics but may attend other provider sites, including those at mass vax sites, FQHCs, pharmacies and hospitals. As is standard, all providers should schedule the second doses at the time of the first.

Proof of Eligibility

Effective March 1, all phases will require a form of verification to confirm eligibility at the time of their appointment.

For 1A, congregate and education/childcare staff, individuals should provide an employment ID badge, payroll stub, business card, letter from employer, or other documentation.

All other individuals eligible due to age bracket may be asked for an ID or other documentation demonstrating date of birth/age.

Timeline for Future Roll-Out

Age 45-54 will tentatively open on March 22; age 35-44 will tentatively open on April 12; other age brackets tentatively on May 3rd.

General CoVP Updates

Current Phase eligibility

All Phase 1a individuals *living or working in Connecticut*:

- **Healthcare Personnel:** All paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients of infectious materials
- **Long-Term Care Facility Residents: Adults** who reside in facilities that provide a range of services, including medical and personal care, to persons who are unable to live independently
- **Medical first responders:** Individuals who face risk of exposure to COVID-19 through their response to medical emergencies
- **Individuals 65-years of age and older**
- **Residents and staff of select congregate settings:** Residential facilities that provide supportive or supervisory services to their residents and where social distancing is not possible due to shared bedrooms, shared kitchens or shared bathrooms. These facilities are either licensed by or otherwise formally affiliated with the State of Connecticut and are administered by a private non-profit or other formal entity. In Phase 1b, congregate settings do **not** include supported apartments, foster or family settings, college dormitories, or boarding schools.

If you are a healthcare provider for a patient who lives out of State and who is not otherwise eligible, (a patient who does not live or work in Connecticut), you should not be vaccinating them, [according to current rules](#).

Actions provider should take to ensure eligibility of vaccine recipients:

In order to help ensure the integrity of the current phase of eligibility, providers should:

- Hang the “current phase” poster (NEW, dated February 22, will be posted [as link on our communications page](#) under today’s date) in a prominent location at the clinic entrance. Depending on clinic flow and layout, multiple copies may be needed.
- Verbally confirm during registration that the vaccine recipient is in the current phase categories (e.g., individual 65 years of age and older, resident or staff member at a qualifying congregate setting, medical first responder, or healthcare personnel who faces risk of exposure to COVID-19). Explain to them that receiving an email invitation or successfully booking an appointment through online scheduling does not confer eligibility– but that they should belong to one of these categories. If not, reschedule their appointment once they are eligible in phase.

Additional items that may be considered:

- **Make best efforts to review upcoming scheduled appointments and contact any individuals that appear to be scheduled out of phase.** Send an email to all upcoming vaccine recipients with current phase eligibility and ask them to cancel appointments if they do not meet eligibility.
- Ask for individuals to sign the [personal attestation card](#).

Individuals who accidentally received a first dose of vaccine but did not meet current eligibility requirements should be scheduled for a second dose once the appropriate interval has passed (21 or 28 days based on product).

Homebound guidance

[Homebound Guidance and updated Storage and Handling Toolkit](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Please note that under #9 of the guidance it is stated, “To prevent wasting vaccine doses, as appropriate and approved by jurisdictions, healthcare personnel may administer vaccine to caretakers and family members, given their high risk of exposure.”

We ask that you continue to follow the [State of CT wastage policy](#); every attempt should be made to find a phase eligible person or failing that, a person who will be in the next phase of eligibility first.

Updated Clinical Consideration Documents (February 10).

- [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States](#)
- [Interim Considerations: Preparing for the Potential Management of Anaphylaxis at COVID-19 Vaccination Sites](#)

(REMINDER) V-safe

Please continue to promote the [v-safe after vaccination health checker](#).

Pfizer Vaccine

Pfizer has submitted new data to the FDA demonstrating the stability of the vaccine when stored at -25°C to -15°C, temperatures more commonly found in freezers. The company has submitted the data to FDA to support a proposed update to the EUA Prescribing Information, which would allow for vaccine vials to be stored at these temperatures for a total of 2 weeks, as an alternative or complement to storage in ultra-low temperature freezers.

The press release can be found here: [Pfizer and BioNTech Submit COVID-19 Vaccine Stability Data at Standard Freeze Temperature to the U.S. FDA | Pfizer](#).

We will keep you updated. This is for your information only, please do not change how you currently store this vaccine.

Updates to CoVP Providers web site

Please note that we have updated our [CoVP Providers web site](#) to reflect changes to the enrollment process, with new resources and content, including how to place an order for vaccines, how to list your clinic on the 211 web site, and additional storage and handling resources. Visit our page to find answers to all of your questions!

Redistribution and Transfer Reminders

Providers who are planning to transfer vaccine from their location to another provider for administration need to have completed a Redistribution Agreement. Please reach out to DPH.Immunizations@ct.gov to request the agreement if needed. All providers should document the transfer on the COVID-19 Vaccine Transfer Form and provide the date the transfer occurred, and the number of doses transferred.

Weekly Call

All providers are strongly encouraged to attend the weekly call at 9:00 AM on Wednesday, February 24th. The program will provide information on inventory management, tracking first and second doses administered, and maintaining first and second dose inventory. The training will be recorded.

VAMS Support/Trainings

- VAMS Appointment Reservation Tier Demonstration- Review the tiered appointment reservation process for first dose, second dose, and walk-in appointments. Demonstrate

the feature in VAMS. **Thursday February 25th 10am-11am or 2pm-3pm** [Join Zoom link](#)

Visit [VAMS Training \(ct.gov\)](#) or you can click on a link below to register or join a session.

- **VAMS Live Helpdesk Office Hours** – this session allows VAMS users to call in any time during the scheduled office hours and ask a question to a VAMS subject matter expert. **Tuesdays & Thursday 9:30am-12:00pm** Join: [VAMS Live Helpdesk Office Hours](#)
- **VAMS – Types of Clinics** - this session provides CoVP Providers an overview of the types of clinics available in VAMS (Standard, Third Party and Mobile) as well as Q&A with DPH staff. **Wednesdays 12:00pm - 1:00pm – 2/24** Register: [VAMS Types of Clinics](#)
- **VAMS Office Hours – Overview and Q&A** - this session provides CoVP Providers and Organization/Employer Coordinators information, guidance and the most up to date information on the functionality of VAMS as well as Q&A with DPH staff. **Fridays 9:00am -10:00am – 2/26** Register: [VAMS Office Hours Overview and Q&A](#)
- **VAMS - Front Desk and Healthcare Professional Clinic Roles Training with Q&A** - this session provides VAMS clinic staff with Front Desk and Healthcare Professional roles in VAMS, the most up-to-date information on system functionality and enhancements, as well as Q&A with DPH staff. **Fridays 9:00am - 10:00am – 3/5, 3/12, 3/19, 3/26** Register: [VAMS - Front Desk and Healthcare Professional Clinic Roles Training with Q&A](#)

Under 'Latest News' at [VAMS Training \(ct.gov\)](#):

- Review the VAMS Enhancements to help you utilize *NEW* VAMS functionality.
- [Transition Business Process](#) if your clinic wants to transition from VAMS to CT WiZ. Please [submit a helpdesk ticket](#) with your PIN and expected date of transition. A meeting will be scheduled to review the process and expectations.

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