

**From:** [noreply-dphimmunizations@ct.gov](mailto:noreply-dphimmunizations@ct.gov) <[noreply@everbridge.net](mailto:noreply@everbridge.net)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 1:33 PM  
**Subject:** August 18: HHS Announcement and Booster Dose Planning



## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Dear Connecticut COVID-19 Vaccine Providers,

*This communication is being sent to all key contacts at provider organizations administering COVID-19 vaccine. Please feel free to 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](#).*

Yesterday, public health and medical experts from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released a [statement](#) on the Administration's plan for COVID-19 booster shots, pending Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval and an Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendation. This preliminary announcement does not change the usual process that is followed regarding FDA approval and ACIP recommendations, which still must occur.

The announcement stated that, pending approvals, Americans 18 and older will be eligible to receive a third shot 8 months after they received their second dose of an mRNA vaccine, starting September 20th. CT DPH expects that a similar announcement regarding J&J will follow, but at this time, there have not been any statements to this effect from our federal partners.

DPH is currently working with all of you to plan for booster doses starting on September 20. Please help us to further our planning efforts by completing the survey by August 20, if you have not done so already. Please see [initial communication](#) distributed to all Connecticut COVID-19 vaccinators, [and click here to complete your survey](#).

DPH will be offering further communication in the upcoming weeks regarding how providers can prepare for the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccine boosters. A few things should be noted:

- Our primary focus at the moment remains on reaching unvaccinated individuals with the primary series of a COVID vaccine.
- The booster roll-out will look different than the initial vaccine roll-out in several ways: We do not anticipate supply constraints; Connecticut has a broader network of COVID vaccine providers at this time than we did during the initial roll-out – including over 400 pharmacies and over 200 provider offices, in addition to local health departments, FQHCs, and hospitals; and we will be encouraging co-administration with flu vaccine wherever possible.
- Equity will remain a central and primary concern. We need every provider's help in ensuring that the gains we have seen in the equity of our roll-out are amplified in the booster roll-out.
- We anticipate approval of the Pfizer vaccine for children as young as 5 sometime this fall or winter, meaning this roll-out will coincide with the booster roll-out. We encourage all providers to make efforts to be able to vaccinate younger children – and we are actively

working with Connecticut's pediatric practices to onboard them as COVID vaccine providers.

- Given that the preliminary plan suggests that all adults will become eligible 8 months after completion of the primary series, this means that we will see peak booster administration volumes in late November, December, and early January.
- An early focus will be on ensuring a quick and effective roll-out to nursing home residents given that these individuals were prioritized in the initial roll out (and thus coming up on 8 months of having completed their primary series) as well as the public health imperative to provide maximum protection in these settings. We will be working with our federal partners and long-term care pharmacies to ensure a robust plan is in place.
- We will be looking forward to all of you supporting this broader booster effort. Although our network is broad, we do anticipate that there will be a need to set up dedicated clinics for COVID boosters (with co-administrated flu wherever possible) – and we look forward to collaborating on this effort.

The HHS announcement highlighted that although we continue to see stable and highly effective protection against hospitalizations and severe outcomes for people who are fully vaccinated, as with nearly all vaccines, there is an observed decrease in vaccine effectiveness against infection over time.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [released three Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports today](#) with more details on the available data that demonstrate the observed decline in vaccine effectiveness.

Please note that these booster doses differ from the ACIP recommended third dose for immunocompromised individuals. In addition, please note the following:

- The COVID-19 mRNA vaccines authorized continue to be effective against the Delta variants.
- Almost all severe cases of COVID-19 are in those who are unvaccinated.
- “Fully vaccinated” is still defined as completion of the primary series. The main objective is to continue to vaccinate the unvaccinated.

**We will be hosting a COVID Vaccine Provider call to discuss booster dose planning next Wednesday, August 25 from 9:00am-10:00am; Join: [CoVP Office Hours](#).** Please note that we had previously communicated that next Wednesday's call would not happen – however, we have reinstated the call for this Wednesday in order to have an opportunity to address and take questions regarding booster doses.

Thank you for all of your ongoing work and support of our COVID vaccine roll-out in Connecticut.

CT DPH Immunization Program Main P: (860) 509-7929 | Fax: (860) 706-5429 | Email: [dph.immunizations@ct.gov](mailto:dph.immunizations@ct.gov) Website: [CT Immunization Program](#) | [COVID-19 Vaccine Program](#)