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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

COVID Vaccine Provider Bulletin

Week of August 2, 2021

Dear Connecticut COVID-19 Vaccine Providers,

Thank you again for your continued efforts in the COVID Vaccine roll-out. This email contains important information for COVID-19 vaccine providers – please read this message in its entirety.

UPDATES

New from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#) *Updated July 28*
 - Updated information for fully vaccinated people given new evidence on the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant currently circulating in the United States.
 - Added a recommendation for fully vaccinated people to wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of [substantial or high transmission](#).
 - Added information that fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission, particularly if they are immunocompromised or at [increased risk for severe disease](#) from COVID-19, or if they have someone in their household who is immunocompromised, at increased risk of severe disease or not fully vaccinated.
 - Added a recommendation for fully vaccinated people who have a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 to be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and to wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.
 - CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status.
- [Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines](#) Visit this CDC page to learn strategies to reinforce confidence in COVID-19 vaccines, complete with key messages and a COVID-19 Vaccine communication toolkit.
- [Vaccination to Prevent COVID-19 Outbreaks with Current and Emergent Variants — United States, 2021](#) CDC Health Advisory July 27, 2021

“Rock the Shot” initiative

As part of Connecticut’s “Rock the Shot” initiative (ct.gov/RockTheShot), DPH can provide concert tickets to COVID-19 vaccine providers to offer as incentives at upcoming vaccine clinics. Providers who can use these tickets as incentives to help support outreach and promotion of COVID vaccination to individuals in communities with low vaccine coverage should contact Jeffrey.sload@ct.gov with the number of tickets you would like, which concerts you are interested in, and how you plan to distribute the tickets.

There are only a few pairs of concert tickets remaining, so please get in touch as soon as possible if you are interested. Tickets can only be awarded to Connecticut residents aged 18 and older, and providers will be responsible for collecting the names and contact information of ticket recipients.

Remaining tickets include:

- Brothers Osbourne 8/20 @ Bridgeport Amphitheatre
- Thomas Rhett 8/21 @ Hartford Xfinity Theatre
- Rod Wave 10/1 @ Bridgeport Amphitheatre

#Vax2SchoolCT Toolkit

COVID vaccines are the most effective tool available to keep schools open and safe. To this end, DPH and CT State Department of Education are working together to make on-site clinics available at every school with age-eligible students in Connecticut **during the months of August, September, and October** (an initiative also being promoted by the White House, see [here](#)).

- Districts can request a clinic anytime for August-October: ct.gov/VANSIntakeForm
- Resources to Support Access:
 - Curriculum: opencied.org/covid-19-health-equity & www.shapeamerica.org/covid19-resources.aspx
 - Campaign: vaxteen.org/resources & madetosave.org/back-to-school
- **Seeking your Support:** We are gathering tools for our statewide vaccine clinic toolkit. If you have anything you especially think should be included (ex. best practices to host vaccines, campaign messages and/or engagement strategies for students & families), please contact David Weinreb, COVID-19 Vaccination Program @ DPH weinreb@ct.gov | 914-393-7671.

Recent COVID-19 vaccine related publications

[COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in Adolescents Aged 12–17 Years — United States, December 14, 2020–July 16, 2021](#). *MMWR*. ePub: 30 July 2021.

[Guidance for Implementing COVID-19 Prevention Strategies in the Context of Varying Community Transmission Levels and Vaccination Coverage](#) *MMWR*. 2021;70(30);1044–7.

[Infection in Public School District Employees Following a District-Wide Vaccination Program — Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, March 21–April 23, 2021](#) *MMWR*. 2021;70(30);1040–3.

[Disparities in COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Among Health Care Personnel Working in Long-Term Care Facilities, by Job Category, National Healthcare Safety Network — United States, March 2021](#) *MMWR*. 2021;70(30);1036–9.

CT Vaccine Program (CT's Pediatric Vaccine Program)

- **August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM)** NIAM is a key opportunity to highlight the importance of vaccination at all ages. Find key messages, sample social media, graphics, and educational resources to assist in your efforts to educate parents and patients about the benefits of vaccination at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/parents/communication-toolkit.html>
- (NEW) CVP Update attached – includes NIAM and resources for catching children up on needed vaccines
- The [CDC Learning Connection](#) is offering a [webinar](#) on Catch-Up Vaccinations: **Catching Up [on Vaccines] in the Time of COVID**. Many children missed routine vaccines over the last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn how to safely deliver catch-up vaccinations with this [webinar](#). Earn free CE through August 16, 2021.
- **Join the [Made to Save & We Can Do This](#) National Back to School Week of Action** Beginning August 7th and ending August 15th, Made to Save and the Department of Health and Human Services' We Can Do This campaign are launching a Week of Action mobilization effort to kick off the school year (including two Weekends of Action on August 7-8 and August 14-15) focused on school and campus-based COVID-19 vaccination drives for students, their families, and their communities.

New Resources

- [Advisory: Confronting Health Misinformation](#) *US Surgeon General* As we continue our work to help protect our communities from the COVID-19 virus, confronting health misinformation is essential to ending the pandemic. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released *Confronting Health Misinformation: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Building a Healthy Information Environment*. Limiting the prevalence and impact of misinformation will help all of us make more informed decisions about our health and the health of our loved ones and communities. Together, we have the power to build a healthier information environment.
- [New Website: COVID-19 Vaccine Equity for Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups](#) *CDC – CHEO* We will achieve COVID-19 vaccine equity when everyone has fair and just access to COVID-19 vaccines. Please visit CDC's new webpage dedicated to COVID-19 Vaccine Equity for Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups to learn more about what you can do to promote vaccine equity. This work is part of CDC's COVID-19 Health Equity Strategy to prioritize efforts to improve the health outcomes of populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19. To help the United States succeed against this public health threat, CDC is working with state, tribal, and

territorial authorities; community-serving organizations; and public and private groups to ensure all public health efforts address the specific cultural, linguistic, environmental, historical, and other needs and priorities of each population.

REMINDERS

We are keeping information on many important reminders from past communications in the space below. To prevent this section from becoming too lengthy, what remains is selected carefully. All past communications are available [here](#).

J&J shelf life extension

The Food & Drug Administration [authorized an extension](#) of the shelf life for the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine from 4.5 months to 6 months (an additional 45 days). The decision is based on data from ongoing stability assessment studies, which have demonstrated that the vaccine is stable at 6 months when refrigerated at temperatures of 36 – 46 degrees Fahrenheit (2 – 8 degrees Celsius). All providers should visit <https://vaxcheck.jnj/> to confirm the latest expiration dates of vaccine. This extension applies to refrigerated vials of J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine that have been held in accordance with the manufacturer's storage conditions.

Please keep in mind that COVID-19 vaccines that are authorized under an EUA do not have fixed expiration dates, and their expiration dates can be extended as we get more stability data. Always be sure to check the manufacturer's website to obtain the most up-to-date expiration dates for COVID-19 vaccines you have on hand.

As a reminder, shipping of new lots of J&J vaccine by CDC has not resumed. With this new extension of the expiration dates, CDC has indicated they do not intend to resume shipment at this time. DPH continues to provide doses of J&J vaccine to providers through redistribution of doses that are already in the state. Orders may be placed through our submissions [portal](#).

July 22 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) meeting

The ACIP met on July 22 to discuss [Guillain-Barré Syndrome](#) (GBS) and additional COVID-19 vaccine doses for the immunocompromised. Slides are available [here](#).

Moderna 10 dose vials no longer available

The CDC has informed us that 10 dose vials of Moderna will no longer be available. After next week, you will only be able to order Moderna in 14 dose vials.

Thermal shippers and Pfizer vaccine

Pfizer is running short of COVID-19 vaccine shipper boxes and Controlant temperature monitors because of the smaller packaging (450 doses vs 1170 doses) requires more shipper boxes and Controlant temperature monitors to deliver the same number of doses.

You can assist with this shortage by returning your shippers and Controlant temperature monitors as soon as possible. Please check the shippers to verify they are completely empty before returning them. Please do not return vaccine or ancillary products in the shippers.

Grant Opportunity: Promoting Vaccine Confidence in Local Communities through Partnership with Regional Health Offices

Federal Health and Human Services (HHS) announced a Notice of Funding Opportunity that provides funding for eligible organizations to establish partnerships with community stakeholders to increase vaccine confidence among populations with low vaccination rates for children and adults, including rural and under-resourced communities. (This is not limited to Covid vaccine.)

Eligible organizations include but are not limited to: state and local governments, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, American Indian/Alaska Native/Native American organizations, and any other organizations serving under-vaccinated and under-resourced communities, as well as minority-serving or other organizations--including public health departments, community organizations, academic institutions, professional or trade organizations, and immunization coalitions--that work with populations with low vaccination rates (e.g., African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, people living with disabilities, etc.).

As part of our ongoing work to advance vaccine equity, DPH would like to encourage Connecticut-based applicants for this funding opportunity. Questions about the grant can be directed to Betsy Rosenfeld at betsy.rosenfeld@hhs.gov. Closing Date is August 17, 2021.

CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force maintains a Communication and Education Product Inventory

- [Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Resources for Jurisdictions, Clinics, and Organizations](#)
- [S. COVID-19 Vaccination Program: Vaccine Channel Portfolio by Jurisdiction](#)

- [About the National Forum on COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- [Resources Page](#)
- [GBS FAQ - Public Health Communication Collaborative](#)

The COVID-19 Vaccination Community Features

One way CDC is contributing to vaccination efforts is by promoting the work happening in communities across the country through [COVID-19 Vaccine Community Features](#). Each week CDC will feature stories that celebrate the people behind the vaccination program and give other communities ideas to improve their programs. Send stories you would like us to feature to ISDcomm@cdc.gov. Include “CVCF Submission” in the subject, a summary of your story, and contact information. We will review the suggestion and send follow up instructions.

Updates regarding vaccine authorization

Moderna adolescent EUA: The Moderna Adolescent EUA for vaccinating adolescents aged 12 through 17 against COVID-19 is expected in **mid- to late July**.

Boosters: No boosters are recommended at this time. You can see a recent joint statement from the CDC and FDA [here](#). CDC stated efforts will continue to document how well COVID-19 vaccines are working including the protection they offer against new COVID-19 variants. Studies are ongoing to determine whether or when booster shots may be needed, but currently, there are not enough data available to support the recommendation of boosters. More information is available from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices from the June meeting [here](#).

Pfizer approval: Pfizer is seeking full FDA approval for its COVID-19 vaccine. A decision is not expected until after August.

The federal public health emergency declaration will likely be in place through 2024

The attached letter, signed by CDC COVID-19 Emergency Response leadership, was circulated to public health partners as a reminder that the federal public health emergency (PHE) declaration and the Declaration, as amended, authorized by the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act are still in effect and will remain in place through 2024. Qualified persons identified/covered by PREP Act to administer vaccines will still be covered regardless of whether a state has an emergency declaration in place.

Check your listing and report/ensure inventory is correct on the CT Vaccine Portal

It is important to register and regularly ensure your clinic information is accurate so that eligible people can find your clinic online:

- To update your clinic listing on the **CT Vaccine Portal** (such as adding/removing a location, updating clinic hours, updating vaccine brands available, etc.), email: Hou@ct.gov
- To make a change or add a new clinic location to the United Way of CT's 211 website, complete the update form at: <https://uwc.211ct.org/contact/vaccine-site-registration/>

Vaccine inventory and ordering

CoVP providers can continue to place orders of any quantity in our ordering portal, as long as it is in multiples of the vial size for the appropriate product. Any orders that are less than the minimum shipment size will be filled by in-state transfer.

The pause on J&J shipments continues for the foreseeable future. Providers may still request doses and we will also fill those by in-state transfer as we have sufficient quantity of doses on the ground. We appreciate the assistance of COVID-19 vaccine providers across Connecticut in supporting these transfers.

CMS is offering We Can Do This COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign Toolkit Webinars

The HHS [We Can Do This](#) campaign is a national initiative working hand in hand with trusted leaders and community organizations to continue to build confidence in COVID-19 vaccines and get more people vaccinated. This campaign offers tailored resources and toolkits for stakeholders to use to provide COVID-19 vaccine information to at-risk populations.

Report expired vaccine

Please promptly report any expired vaccine to the CT WiZ [Helpdesk](#). Keep in mind that there are no negative consequences for reporting waste, and it will not negatively impact future allocations. CT DPH recognizes that unused expired vaccine is a normal part of this phase of the vaccination program.

Replacement CDC COVID Vaccination Cards

Clinics are allowed to issue replacement CDC COVID Vaccination Cards to their vaccine recipients, should they contact you when their card is lost or needs a correction. *DPH can issue the immunization record from CT WiZ, but cannot issue a card to recipients.*

If your clinic needs additional CDC COVID Vaccination Cards, contact DPH.Immunizations@ct.gov and we will email you a pdf of the card for your clinic to print (*note: these cannot be posted on your website.*) Large type print cards are also available, via pdf.

Upcoming Clinic Trainings and Office Hours

- **CoVPUpdate**
Provides CoVP Vaccinating Providers updates on the CoVP Program and Q&A with DPH staff. **Every other Wednesday** 9:00am-10:00am; Join: [CoVP Office Hours](#)
- **CoVPCT WiZ Enrollment Office Hours**

Provides information about the CoVP enrollment process in CT WiZ and Q&A with DPH staff. **Mondays & Thursdays** 12:00pm-12:30pm; Join: [CoVP CT WiZ Enrollment Office Hours](#)

- **Vaccine Storage and Handling Assessment**
For clinics who completed CoVP enrollment and received an invite to attend. **Tuesdays & Thursdays** 10:00am-11:00am and 1:00pm-2:00pm; **By invitation Only**
- **CT WiZ Inventory Management Office Hours (NEW)**

Provides information on how to manage inventory functions in CT WiZ such as: reconciliations, transfers, wastage, etc. and Q & A with DPH staff. **Wednesdays** 12:00pm-1:00pm; Join: [CT WiZ Inventory Management Office Hours](#)

- **VAMS & CT WiZ Live Helpdesk Office Hours**

Clinics can ask questions about VAMS and CT WiZ functionality to DPH staff. **Tuesdays** 9:00am 10:00am; Join: [VAMS Live Helpdesk Office Hours](#)

Visit: [VAMS Training](#) and [CT WiZ Training](#) for enhancement release notes and training.