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Subject: COVID Vaccine Provider Bulletin Week of August 9, 2021



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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

Action Required: COVID-19 Fall Planning Survey (including Boosters & Children under 12)

Please see the attached letter that was distributed to all Connecticut COVID-19 vaccinators last week, requesting information on your organization's plans for back-to-school clinics, expanded age groups and boosters.

Please make sure that someone in your organization completes this survey by Thursday, August 12: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/COVID-19VaccinePlanning>.

Please keep in mind that no official Food and Drug Administration or Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices decision or recommendation has been made to expand the eligible age range or administer booster doses to any population. However, we recognize that both events are likely and DPH wants to ensure that our provider network is ready to quickly deliver vaccines to target populations once recommended.

Letter to pharmacies from CT Department of Public Health and Department of Consumer Protection (DCP)

Please see the attached letter that was distributed to pharmacies through the DCP, requesting the assistance of pharmacies in eliminating COVID-19 testing and vaccination barriers within the undocumented/uninsured community.

Supporting Back-to-School COVID Vaccine Clinics (#Vax2SchoolCT)

As is reflected in the **Fall 2021 Interim Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention**, COVID vaccines are the most effective tool available to keep schools open and safe. To this end, DPH and SDE are working together to make on-site vaccination clinics available at every school with age-eligible students in Connecticut during the months of August, September, and October. We know that access to vaccines is most effectively provided when accompanied by thoughtful outreach, marketing, and curriculum that leverages the trusted relationships that educators and school communities have. This toolkit serves to provide guidance in a number of these areas.

We are encouraging all districts to work closely with their local health departments, vaccine providers, and DPH to plan these clinics (click [HERE](#) for a live updated list of available vaccine providers who have indicated a desire to support back-to-school clinics; you can add your clinic via the fall planning survey).

As a reminder, all providers who are enrolled in the COVID-19 Vaccine Program (CoVP) have the ability to order Pfizer vaccine in any quantity. Providers enrolled in CoVP can reach out to DPH with questions on obtaining Pfizer vaccine for your clinic.

Districts and school leaders should start by reviewing this toolkit. Vaccine Providers should feel free to reach out to local schools to determine how they can support these efforts. Districts or school leaders should complete the School COVID Vaccine Clinic Plan Form by Wednesday, August 18 to indicate how they plan to participate in this statewide effort. Contact DPH.Vax2School@ct.gov with questions.

Attention! CT WiZ will be down on Wednesday 08/11/2021 at 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm

On Wednesday **8/11/2021** CT WiZ will be down between 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm for a new release. Please plan your entry and electronic querying accordingly.

Pfizer Shelf-Life Update

Pfizer plans to submit a request for extension on the shelf-life of their COVID-19 vaccine on August 15, 2021. Results of that request should be available before the end of August. Providers who have Pfizer vaccine expiring at the end of August should monitor communications and verify expiration dates before discarding any product.

Updates to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Communication and Education Product Inventory

The following materials at the following links have recently been updated by CDC:

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs for Healthcare Professionals

Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine (Johnson & Johnson) Questions

Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

Recent COVID-19 vaccine related publications

Effectiveness of COVID-19 Vaccines in Preventing Hospitalization Among Adults Aged ≥ 65 Years — COVID-NET, 13 States, February–April 2021. MMWR. 2021;70(early release).

Reduced Risk of Reinfection with SARS-CoV-2 After COVID-19 Vaccination — Kentucky, May–June 2021. MMWR. 2021;70(early release).

COVID-19 Vaccine Safety in Adolescents Aged 12–17 Years — United States December 14, 2020–July 16, 2021 MMWR. 2021;70(early release).

Outbreak of SARS-CoV-2 Infections, Including COVID-19 Vaccine Breakthrough Infections, Associated with Large Public Gatherings — Barnstable County, Massachusetts, July 2021 MMWR. 2021;70(early release).

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](#).

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

- Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People *Updated July 28*
- 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.

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>
- CVP Update – 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, a **Week of Action** mobilization effort to kick off the school year focused on school and campus-based COVID-19 vaccination drives for students, their families, and their communities.

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.

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). All providers should visit <https://vaxcheck.jnj/> to confirm the latest expiration dates of vaccine.

As a reminder, shipping of new lots of J&J vaccine by CDC has not resumed. 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.

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.

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 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 **August**.

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: Caroline.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

- **CoVP Update**
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](#)
- **CoVP CT 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.