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Subject: COVID Vaccine Provider Bulletin Week of June 14, 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

[Shelf life extended for Johnson & Johnson \(J&J\) vaccine](#)

The Food & Drug Administration [authorized an extension](#) of the shelf life for the J&J COVID-19 vaccine from 3 months to 4.5 months (an additional 6 weeks). The decision is based on data from ongoing stability assessment studies, which have demonstrated that the vaccine is stable at 4.5 months when refrigerated at temperatures of 36 – 46 degrees Fahrenheit (2 – 8 degrees Celsius).

Vaccine providers should visit <https://vaxcheck.inj/> to confirm the latest expiration dates of vaccine, including those currently available for administration throughout the U.S. This extension applies to refrigerated vials of J&J COVID-19 vaccine that have been held in accordance with the manufacturer's storage conditions.

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.

For your reference, a communication was sent out on June 9 about retaining expiring J&J vaccine and is available [here](#).

J&J shipment pause

Providers may have heard on the news that CDC is pausing new shipments of J&J vaccine for the time being. This does not affect the ability of providers to order more J&J within the State of Connecticut.

J&J vaccines are still available for order from the State in the [COVID-19 vaccine ordering portal](#); if you need this vaccine, please place an order and we will work to get you redistributed vaccine from another provider who will not be able to use all of the doses they have in inventory.

Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) meeting scheduled

The ACIP has scheduled a meeting for Friday June 18, which will include an update on COVID-19 vaccine safety, including myocarditis after mRNA vaccines, and benefit-risk discussion on use of the vaccine in adolescents and young adults. The draft meeting agenda and link to livestream meeting is available [here](#).

Healthcare providers are reminded to consider myocarditis in an evaluation of chest pain after vaccination and [report all cases to VAERS](#).

CDC published [Clinical Considerations](#) for myocarditis and pericarditis following COVID-19 vaccination. Additionally, [resources for the public](#) have been added to CDC's website that can be a resource for your patients.

CDC continues to recommend [COVID-19 vaccination](#) for everyone 12 years of age and older, given the greater risk of COVID-19 illness and related, possibly severe complications.

At-Home COVID-19 Vaccinations Get a Medicare Payment Boost

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [announced](#) an additional payment for giving in-home COVID-19 vaccinations to Medicare beneficiaries who have difficulty either leaving their homes or getting to a vaccination site.

Medicare will pay an additional \$35 per dose, on top of the current approximate payment of \$40, bringing the total payment for COVID-19 vaccinations administered in a beneficiary's home to about \$75 per dose. For a two-dose vaccine, the total payment will be approximately \$150 for both – approximately \$70 more than the current rate. The additional payment also accounts for the clinical time needed to monitor the beneficiary after the vaccine is administered.

Moderna files for authorization for age 12 to 17

On June 10 Moderna filed for EUA from the FDA to use its COVID-19 vaccine in adolescents ages 12 through 17. If cleared by the FDA, Moderna will become the second COVID -19 vaccine available for teens under 18 along with Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine. Moderna is also available for order in smaller pack sizes of 100 doses, which may make it a more convenient choice for some providers. A date for the FDA review has not yet been set, but may take about a month based on past practice.

CoVP Office Hours moving to every other week

Starting next Wednesday June 16, we will be moving to CoVP Office Hours on an every other week schedule. The next meetings are on June 16, June 30, and July 14. If you ever have any questions, especially new providers just getting started with the CoVP, please reach out to the Immunization Program at Dph.immunizations@ct.gov or by phone at 860 509-7929.

New Immunization Reports from MMWR

[Decreases in COVID-19 Cases, Emergency Department Visits, Hospital Admissions, and Deaths Among Older Adults Following the Introduction of COVID-19 Vaccine — United States, September 6, 2020–May 1, 2021.](#)

[Hospitalization of Adolescents Aged 12–17 Years with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 — COVID-NET, 14 States, March 1, 2020–April 24, 2021.](#)

[Patterns in COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage, by Social Vulnerability and Urbanicity — United States, December 14, 2020–May 1, 2021.](#)

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](#).

Open Data Portal

Connecticut Open Data Portal (ODP) is a collection of state agency data that are freely available to the public at data.ct.gov. The Portal is managed by the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management. COVID-19 vaccination coverage data are posted on the ODP and updated each Thursday afternoon. A summary of COVID 19 vaccination distribution data can be see here: <https://data.ct.gov/stories/s/bhcd-4mnv>.

Vaccine coverage datasets can also be downloaded from the Portal including datasets on vaccine coverage (both at least one dose administered and fully vaccinated) by age, race/ethnicity, gender, county, town, census tract and residence in high priority zip code. An overview of COVID-19 vaccine coverage data on the Portal will be given on the [Weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Update](#) on June 9th.

COVID-19 DQA Report to Clinics and Pharmacies

- A COVID-19 data quality assurance (DQA) report for clinics and pharmacies with more than 10 patient or vaccine record errors (including patients with a mixed product series, expired doses administered, and patients with more than 2 doses) and second doses due will be sent via a secure OneDrive folder to the primary contact in CT WiZ for your revision and follow up.
- Our DQA team will follow up to ensure you understand how to make corrections in either your Electronic Health Record (EHR) system or in CT WiZ. Any questions can be directed to the DQA staff who sent you the report. Please remember to ensure the confidentiality of patient data by using the secure OneDrive folder and never email patient information.

Reporting Reminder

As part of the COVID-19 provider agreement, COVID-19 vaccine providers agree to report administered doses within 24 hours. There have been some considerable delays in reporting, particularly from providers partnering on mobile clinics. Please ensure timely reporting of doses administered and follow the provider agreement. Other providers and vaccine recipients are counting on you so that they can access the information from CT WiZ, our immunization information system.

Vaccine Lot Management and Expiration

In order to minimize the number of unused expired doses and manage expired doses correctly, we encourage providers to:

- Monitor expiration dates weekly, rotate stock as needed, and follow a “first in, first out” strategy to manage inventory.
- If nearing expiration, check posted manufacturer information for the most up to date expiration/extension information for vaccine lots.
- Based on the latest expiration information and unless instructed to do otherwise, REMOVE expired vaccine from the storage unit. Do not give staff opportunity to administer expired vaccine. If expired vaccine is inadvertently administered, it is considered a vaccine administration error and requires remediation including a VAERS report, contacting the recipient to inform them of the error, and may or may not require revaccination based on the manufacturers’ guidance. Guidance on vaccine administration errors can be found in Appendix A of the [Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States](#).
- Vaccine disposal: dispose of the vaccine vial (with any remaining vaccine) and packaging as medical waste. Do NOT return vaccine in the thermal shipping container.
- Check your vaccine stock for lots expiring using the [CDC’s Vaccine Lot Number and Expiration Date webpage](#). Request access to a new COVID-19 Vaccine Lot Number report via CDC’s Vaccine Code Set Management Service (VCSMS). This report includes COVID-19 vaccine lot numbers and expiration dates provided to CDC by the vaccine manufacturers. This report is updated daily and can be used to support vaccine administration, inventory management, and jurisdiction IISs. Complete the registration form on [CDC’s Vaccine Lot Number and Expiration Date webpage](#) to request access to the report.

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.

Please update your COVID Vaccine location listings

As providers consolidate schedules and locations, please check and update your listings on [covidvaccinefinder.ct.gov](#). If any corrections are needed, please email Caroline.Hou@ct.gov.

Please ensure the following are correct: vaccine type(s) offered; operating hours noted in the details area; walk-up appointment availability. Locations with walk up appointments are now indicated on the finder. If you have plans to close a clinic location, please let us know.

Summary of Adolescent Vaccine Tools

Tools for the public:

- [COVID-19 Vaccines for Children and Teens](#) provides information about the benefits of COVID-19 vaccines for adolescents aged 12 and older, how to find a vaccination provider for adolescents, and what to expect during and after vaccination.
- [COVID-19 Vaccines for Preteens and Teens](#) is a printable fact sheet for parents that explains the benefits of a COVID-19 vaccine for their children, safety information, and what to expect during and after vaccination.
- **Frequently asked questions:** Two [new FAQs](#) address questions about the safety and benefits of COVID-19 vaccination for adolescents aged 12 and older.
- **Myth-buster about menstrual cycles:** Your menstrual cycle *cannot* be affected by being near someone who received a COVID-19 vaccine. This [question and answer](#) explains why.
- **Myth-buster about infertility:** It is safe for people who would like to have a baby one day to get a COVID-19 vaccine. This [question and answer](#) explains why.
- **Key things to know:** The web pages [Key Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines](#) and [About COVID-19 Vaccines](#) have been updated to include the recommendation that adolescents aged 12 and older get vaccinated.

Information for Healthcare and Vaccine Providers:

- **Pediatric toolkit:** The [Pediatric Healthcare Professionals COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkit](#) provides materials to help healthcare providers give parents clear and accurate information about COVID-19 vaccines. The toolkit includes answers to common questions, an explanation of how mRNA vaccines work, and printable materials to give to parents.
- **FAQs about consent for minors:** [FAQs](#) have been posted on the Pfizer-BioNTech product page for providers with information about consent, prescreening questions, and other issues related to the vaccination of minors.
- **Sample patient letter:** Healthcare providers can customize and send this [sample letter](#) to encourage their patients to get a COVID-19 vaccine. It includes the new recommendation that everyone aged 12 and up get a COVID-19 vaccination.

UPDATED CDC Webpages and Clinician Resources

- General information about COVID-19 vaccine products for clinicians and healthcare professionals can be found on the [COVID-19 Vaccination webpage](#).
- [Risk Benefit Analysis \(cdc.gov\)](#)

As always, please continue to encourage patients to register for V-safe; report adverse events to VAERS.

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**
- **VAMS Live Helpdesk Office Hours**
Clinics can ask questions about VAMS functionality to DPH staff. **Tuesdays** 9:00am 10:00am & **Thursdays** – 1:00pm – 2:00pm; Join: [VAMS Live Helpdesk Office Hours](#)

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