

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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HEALTHCARE QUALITY AND SAFETY BRANCH

BLAST FAX 2020-104

TO: Residential Care Homes

FROM: Acting Commissioner Deidre S. Gifford, MD, MPH

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DATE: November 4, 2020

SUBJECT: **For Immediate Attention** -- Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is partnering with CVS and Walgreens to offer onsite vaccination of the residents of facilities that offer community-based care, supervision, or assistance to older adults (>65 years of age) in congregate settings. Participants in the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care Program will receive end-to-end management of the COVID-19 vaccination process, including cold chain management, on-site vaccination, and fulfillment of reporting requirements. **Cold chain management will likely need to include storage of ultra-cold product, stored at -60 to -80 Celsius, so planning for this vaccine is extremely important. The partnership with CVS and Walgreens ensures the capacity to handle the ultra-cold product.**

CT DPH strongly encourages CT Residential Care Homes to enroll in this program. Facilities should use the following link to express interest and to indicate which pharmacy partner they prefer (<https://redcap.link/LTCF>). Indicating interest in participating in this program is non-binding and facilities may change their selection or opt in or out via email later.

Sign up ends this Friday, 11/6/2020, so we encourage you to sign up now.



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Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for COVID-19 Vaccination

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. How do I sign up for the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for COVID-19 Vaccination?

Instructions differ for CMS-certified long-term care facilities and other facilities (e.g., assisted living facilities, or similar congregate living settings for individuals older than 65 years of age):

- If your facility is a CMS-certified long-term care facility and currently reports data through the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN), please log in to NHSN via the SAMS portal (<https://sams.cdc.gov>) and look for the link to the Pharmacy Partnership Program under Alerts. You will **not** receive a confirmation email after enrolling. CDC will communicate this information to your chosen pharmacy provider. When it is time to schedule on-site clinics, CVS or Walgreens will reach out directly to your facility to coordinate the event.
- If your facility is an assisted living facility, or similar congregate living setting for individuals older than 65 years of age, please enroll via this online form link: <https://redcap.link/LTCF>. You will **not** receive a confirmation email after enrolling. CDC will communicate this information to your chosen pharmacy provider. When it is time to schedule on-site clinics, CVS or Walgreens will reach out directly to your facility to coordinate the event.
 - If you have 10 or more assisted living facilities, or similar congregate living settings for individuals older than 65 years of age, and you would like to enroll, a bulk entry template is available via the [REDCap link](#). Please return the bulk entry template to this email address, eocevent494@cdc.gov.

2. Why are long-term care facilities being asked to consider the pharmacy partnership program for vaccination of residents? Does enrollment in the program guarantee that residents will receive COVID-19 vaccination services?

Facilities are being asked to consider the program because it aims to facilitate safe vaccination of long-term care residents and reduce the burden on facilities and health departments. CDC is partnering with pharmacies to offer on-site COVID-19 vaccination services for residents in all long-term care settings, including skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and similar congregate living settings where most individuals are over 65 years of age. The Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program provides end-to-end management of the COVID-19 vaccination process, including cold chain management, on-site vaccinations, and fulfillment of reporting requirements, to facilitate safe vaccination of this patient population, while reducing burden on facilities and jurisdictional health departments.

Enrollment in this program is **not an order for vaccine or guarantee of vaccination services**. Participation in this program simply identifies your facility as willing to receiving vaccine from CVS or Walgreens *when* vaccine becomes available and *if* your facility is eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine under the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations.

3. Can staff at my facility get vaccinated via this program?

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It is possible that staff will be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine earlier than LTCF residents as part of a recommendation for vaccination for healthcare personnel, including those in LTCFs. Any staff member who was not already vaccinated could be vaccinated through these on-site clinics; however, we strongly encourage staff to be vaccinated as soon as they are eligible, which may occur through mobile clinics and clinics run by health departments for healthcare personnel.

4. Is our facility eligible for this program?

All long-term care facilities are eligible to participate in the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care Program, including skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities (residential long-term care facilities providing assistance and supervision to primarily elderly residents with activities of daily living and skills for independent living), and similar congregate living settings where most individuals are older than 65 years of age.

5. If our facility enrolls in this program, do they also have to sign the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement?

No. If a facility opts into the pharmacy partnership program, they do not have to sign a CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement. CVS or Walgreens staff will be responsible for administering the vaccine and signing the agreement.

However, if a facility will be involved in vaccine administration after the pharmacy partnership program ends (e.g., for staff or for new residents), then a provider agreement must be signed with their state.

6. Can our facility obtain COVID-19 vaccine through our usual pharmacy and administer it ourselves like we do for influenza vaccine?

Yes, however, most of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in late-stage testing have stricter cold chain requirements than seasonal influenza vaccine, including requirements for some vaccines to be frozen. Additionally, each vaccine has different mixing requirements for administration and minimal interval requirements for a second dose, if indicated. Reporting requirements for COVID-19 vaccines will also be stricter than those for seasonal influenza vaccine. Anyone who administers COVID-19 vaccine is required to enroll as a vaccination provider and report individual-level administration data to the appropriate state, territorial, local, or federal jurisdiction once the vaccine has been administered. For facilities opting into the pharmacy partnership program, the pharmacy partner would be responsible for procuring vaccine, cold chain management, administration to residents (and staff who have not yet been vaccinated), and fulfillment of all reporting requirements to public health authorities on behalf of the facility.

7. Our facility has their own pharmacy, are we required to participate in the pharmacy partnership program for vaccine distribution?

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No, you are not required to participate in this program. A facility can opt to have vaccine supply and management services coordinated by a pharmacy provider of their choice or opt in at a later time by emailing eocevent494@cdc.gov to sign up after the online form has closed. If a LTCF opts out of the pharmacy partnership program, the LTCF and the pharmacy provider of their choice are responsible for coordination of and adherence to all vaccine supply chain, storage, handling, administration, and reporting requirements, including strict cold chain and public health reporting requirements.

8. Can a combination of options be selected? For example, can we have some vaccination services be provided by our own pharmacy provider and some by the pharmacy partnership program.

Initially, a combination of options will not be possible. We are asking facilities to select a single option to facilitate efficient distribution of vaccine. We expect the pharmacy partnership services to continue on-site at the facility for approximately 2 months.

9. How would new LTCF residents be vaccinated?

After the initial phase of vaccinations, the facility can choose to continue to work with the pharmacy that provided their initial on-site clinics for additional doses or can choose to work with a pharmacy provider of their choice. Depending on vaccine supply, facilities may want to work with local hospitals to ensure residents have received their first dose before being discharged. Similarly, facilities may ask new admissions from the community to get vaccinated before admission.

10. What costs are we responsible for if we choose to participate in the pharmacy partnership program?

The program is free of charge to facilities. CVS or Walgreens will bill private and public insurance for the vaccine administration fee. Additional information regarding COVID-19 vaccination costs can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>.

11. If the facility chooses its own pharmacy provider, will that pharmacy provider receive a payment for administering the vaccine?

Yes, it is anticipated that pharmacy providers will bill public and private insurance for the vaccine administration fees.

12. If the facility chooses its own pharmacy provider, what data will the facility or pharmacy have to report?

To administer COVID-19 vaccine, providers will need to sign a provider agreement, which requires reporting of specific data elements once vaccine has been administered. Required elements are: Administered at location: facility name/ID; administered at location: type; administration address (including county); administration date; CVX (Product); dose number; recipient ID; vaccination event ID; lot Number: Unit of Use and/or Unit of Sale; MVX (Manufacturer); recipient

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address; recipient date of birth; recipient name; recipient sex; sending organization; vaccine administering provider suffix; vaccine administering site (on the body); vaccine expiration date; vaccine route of administration; vaccination series complete.

13. When is the deadline for choosing to participate in the pharmacy partnership program?

The enrollment form opened on October 19, 2020 and will remain open until October 30, 2020. During that time, the facility can make a change to their choice of pharmacy provider (e.g., select to participate in the pharmacy partnership program, but later opt out). However, after the form closes, no changes can be made via the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) or the online form and the facility will have to coordinate directly with the pharmacy provider selected to make any changes regarding vaccination supply and services.

14. Our facility is not enrolled in NHSN. Do we have to enroll in NHSN to indicate our options for vaccine supply?

A nursing home or skilled nursing facility must be enrolled in the NHSN LTCF COVID-19 module to be able to make a selection of COVID-19 vaccine pharmacy providers. Please follow the enrollment steps here: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/covid19/enroll.html>. Assisted living facilities and other adult congregate living settings that do not report to NHSN and wish to participate should visit <https://redcap.link/LTCF>.

15. Whom do we contact if we have problems with our vaccine supply?

For facilities that opt to participate in the pharmacy partnership program, please contact CVS or Walgreens directly if you encounter any issues. For facilities that opt out of the pharmacy partnership program, please contact the pharmacy provider of your choice or your jurisdiction's health department.

16. Is the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) mandating residents to be vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine?

Not at this time. Please refer to CMS directly for requirements around COVID-19 vaccine in LTCFs.

17. Our facility is in a remote/rural location that does not have a CVS or Walgreens in our service area (or a CVS/Walgreens is >75 miles away from our facilities). Can we still participate in the program?

Through the program, CVS and Walgreens are committed to serving any facility within 75 miles of one of their stores. Facilities in especially remote locations should work with their state health departments and local pharmacies (e.g., long-term care, specialty, or health system pharmacy) to coordinate vaccination services. However, if the facility does select CVS or Walgreens and neither can reach them, they should be notified of such by the pharmacy. If your facility is in a remote/rural location and you have concerns regarding vaccine availability through the program or other means, or if you would like a point of contact for your state health department, please contact eocevent494@cdc.gov.

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18. We are a long-term care pharmacy (or vaccination services provider) interested in participating in the program. How do we enroll?

Long-term care and specialty pharmacies will play a critical role in the COVID-19 vaccination program. Currently, CDC does not have a mechanism in place to directly enroll individual pharmacies in this program. This situation is rapidly evolving, and if the opportunity arises for the federal government to partner directly with individual pharmacies in the future, we will work to do so. We encourage you to contact your state health department for opportunities to participate in vaccine distribution and vaccination services—including signing the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement.

19. Who should I reach out to if I have additional questions?

For questions specific to the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program please contact eocevent494@cdc.gov.

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CDC is partnering with CVS and Walgreens to offer on-site COVID-19 vaccination services for residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities once vaccination is recommended for them.

The [Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care \(LTC\) Program](#) provides end-to-end management of the COVID-19 vaccination process, including cold chain management, on-site vaccinations, and fulfillment of reporting requirements, to facilitate safe vaccination of this patient population, while reducing burden on LTC facilities and jurisdictional health departments. The services will be available in rural areas that may not have easily accessible pharmacies. LTCF staff who have not received COVID-19 vaccine can also be vaccinated as part of the program.

As part of this program, which is free of charge to facilities, the pharmacy will:

- Schedule and coordinate on-site clinic date(s) directly with each facility. Three visits over approximately two months will likely be needed to administer both doses of vaccine and vaccinate any new residents and staff.
- Order vaccines and associated supplies (e.g., syringes, needles, personal protective equipment).
- Ensure cold chain management for vaccine.
- Provide on-site administration of vaccine.
- Report required vaccination data (approximately 20 data fields) to the local, state/territorial, and federal jurisdictions within 72 hours of administering each dose.
- Adhere to all applicable Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) COVID-19 testing requirements for LTCF staff.

If interested in participating, LTCFs should sign up (or opt out) starting October 19. Sign up will remain open for two weeks.

- Skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) will make their selection through the [National Healthcare Safety Network](#) (NHSN). An “alert” will be incorporated into the NHSN LTCF COVID-19 module to guide users to the form.
- Assisted living facilities (ALFs) will make their selection via an online [REDCap](https://redcap.link/LTCF) (<https://redcap.link/LTCF>) sign-up form.
- Facilities will indicate which pharmacy partner (one of two large retail pharmacies or existing LTC pharmacy) they prefer to have on site.
- Online sign-up information will be distributed through ALF and SNF partner communication channels (email, social media, web).
- Indicating interest in participating is non-binding and facilities may change their selection or opt in or out via email after the online survey closes.

Once the sign-up period has closed, no changes can be made via the online form, and the facility must coordinate directly with the selected pharmacy provider to change any requested vaccination supplies and services.

CDC will communicate preferences to CVS and Walgreens and will try to honor facility preferences but may reassign facilities depending on vaccine availability and distribution considerations and to minimize vaccine wastage.

CDC expects the program services to continue on site at participating facilities for approximately two months. After the initial phase of vaccinations, each facility can choose to continue working with CVS or Walgreens or can work with a pharmacy provider of its choice.

For questions about the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care Program, please contact eocevent494@cdc.gov.