



# Health Alert



## **Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care COVID-19 Vaccination** October 19, 2020

### **Summary and Action Items**

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is partnering with 2 national pharmacy chains (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.
- This vaccination program is provided at no cost to the facility.
- Long Term Care Facilities (LTCFs) must sign-up to participate in this program. Program sign-up opened Monday, October 19, 2020 and will remain open for 2 weeks. The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) encourages LTCFs to participate in this program, if possible
- LTCFs are also asked to complete the CDPH LTCF survey, if not previously completed. The survey can be accessed at <https://redcap.link/jtfqh2md>

### **Background:**

CDC is partnering with pharmacies to offer on-site COVID-19 vaccination services for nursing homes and assisted living facilities. 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 facilities and jurisdictional health departments.

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.

### **Sign-up instructions:**

Sign-up for this program will open on Monday, October 19, 2020. Sign-up will remain open for 2 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>) 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.

### **Pharmacy partnership frequently asked questions:**

#### **What costs are the LTCF responsible for if we choose to participate in the pharmacy partnership program?**

There will be no costs to the LTCF for participation in the pharmacy partnership program. It is anticipated that participating pharmacies will bill public and private insurance for the vaccine administration fees.

#### **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 wishing to participate should visit <https://redcap.link/LTCF>.

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

No, you are not required to participate in this program, but CDPH encourages LTCFs to participate in this program if possible. 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](mailto:eocevent494@cdc.gov) to sign up if the online form has closed. If an 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.

#### **When is the deadline for choosing to participate in the LTC pharmacy partnership program?**

It is anticipated that the survey will open on October 19, 2020 and remain open for two weeks. 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.

#### **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.

#### **Can staff at my facility get vaccinated via this program?**

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, it is likely that staff will be eligible for vaccination before LTCF residents are eligible for vaccination. Staff are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated as soon as they are eligible, which may occur through mobile clinics and clinics run by CDPH for healthcare personnel.

### **Chicago Department of Public Health LTCF Survey:**

CDPH recently distributed a survey to LTCFs. Facility administrators are asked to complete the CDPH LTCF survey, if not previously completed. Information from this survey will be used by CDPH for COVID-19 vaccine planning, including plans for vaccination of LTCF staff. The survey can be accessed at <https://redcap.link/jfqh2md>.