



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MARGRET R. COOKE
Acting Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

Memorandum

TO: Long-Term Care Facilities
Pharmacies that Service Long-Term Care Facilities and Certified Assisted Living Residences

FROM: Elizabeth Kelley, MBA, MPH, Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality
David Sencabaugh, R.Ph., Director, Board of Registration in Pharmacy

SUBJECT: Vaccination of Assisted Living and Long-Term Care Residents, Visitors, and Staff

DATE: July 30, 2021

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) continues to work with state, federal and local partners on the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and we continue to appreciate the essential role you have in responding to this evolving situation.

Vaccinating assisted living and long-term care facility residents, staff, and visitors against COVID-19 is a crucial step in preventing the spread of COVID-19. With the goal of improving access for COVID-19 vaccines, this guidance provides recommendations to long-term care facilities and assisted living residences for obtaining COVID-19 vaccine for residents, staff, and visitors by contacting its pharmacy to provide the necessary vaccine. This guidance replaces the guidance released on June 22, 2021 and provides information on how pharmacies that currently have a contractual agreement to provide controlled substances to assisted living residences (ALR) and long-term care facilities (LTCF) may provide COVID-19 vaccine to a LTCF or ALR without patient specific prescriptions, pursuant to the Order of the Commissioner of Public Health dated July 30, 2021.

An assisted living residence or long-term care facility may receive and possess COVID-19 vaccine from such a retail pharmacy, without obtaining a Massachusetts Controlled Substance Registration as a health facility in accordance with 105 CMR 700.004(A)(2), provided that the LTCF:

- Complies with all state and federal rules and regulations for security and storage of COVID-19 vaccine;
- Administers the vaccine pursuant to a valid practitioner's order;

- Enrolls in and complies with all terms of the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccination Program (MCVP), which shall include execution of the MCVP Agreement; and
- Reports all immunization information as required by law, including G.L. c. 111 §24M and 105 CMR 222, and the Order of the Commissioner of Public Health Regarding Reporting to the Massachusetts Immunization Information System.

In order for a pharmacy to receive and then dispense COVID-19 vaccine, for either a patient-specific vaccine prescription or without a patient-specific vaccine prescription, to assisted living residences and long-term care facilities, the pharmacy must:

- Register with the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS). Information on the MIIS may be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-immunization-information-system-miis>
- Complete the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program (MCVP) Agreement. Information on registering for MCVP may be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccine-program-mcvc-guidance-for-vaccine-providers-and>
- Dispense the COVID-19 vaccine in accordance with [Board policies](#); and
- Comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Assisted living residences and long-term care facilities must ensure that there are sufficient residents, staff, and visitors in need of COVID-19 vaccine in order to maximize the use of vaccines and to prevent vaccine waste.

A pharmacy may administer the vaccine to the assisted living residents or long-term care facility residents, staff, and visitors if the pharmacy employs authorized vaccinators. Otherwise, the assisted living residence or long-term care facility must have an authorized vaccinator and will be responsible for the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine, monitoring the resident, staff member, or visitor after vaccination for any adverse events and for all reporting requirements in the MIIS.

Every time the pharmacy dispenses vaccine to an assisted living residence or long-term care facility, the pharmacy is responsible for transferring the dispensed doses in MIIS to the receiving facility. In order to transfer the dispensed doses in MIIS, the pharmacy will need to obtain the assisted living residence or long-term care facility's MIIS Provider Identification Number (MIIS PIN).

Pharmacies must review the Weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Bulletin and comply with its contents, including any thresholds for vaccine usage, to continue to receive allocations. The most recent bulletin may be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccine-program-mcvc-guidance-for-vaccine-providers-and-organizations#weekly-provider-bulletins->

If, a long-term care facility has a **resident who requires a second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine**, the long-term care facility should obtain a second dose by:

- Contacting DPH to coordinate administration of the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine by an authorized vaccinator from a rapid response team. Please see Attachment A for an overview of this vaccination process

As a reminder, it is the responsibility of the vaccinator to report vaccine side effects to FDA/CDC Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).

The VAERS toll-free number is 1-800-822-7967. Online reporting is available at the following page: <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>.

Please visit DPH's website that provides up-to-date information on COVID-19 and vaccine efforts in Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus> and <https://www.mass.gov/vaccine>.

Attachment A – Process for Obtaining Second Dose of Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine from DPH

When a long-term care facility resident has received the first dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine the long-term care facility may arrange for the second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine by following the below process:

- At least one week prior to the administration of the second dose of vaccine, the long-term care facility must contact DPH at the following email address dph.bhcsq@mass.gov and provide the number of residents and date(s) of the first dose of vaccine.
- Upon receiving notification from the long-term care facility that the resident is in need of a second Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, DPH will confirm that the long-term care facility is enrolled in the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program (MCVP) and will work with the long-term care facility to schedule a date for resident vaccination and ensure that there is a provider order for the vaccine.
- On the scheduled date, an authorized vaccinator from the rapid response team will arrive at the long-term care facility, confirm the provider order for vaccination, vaccinate the resident, and monitor the resident after vaccination for any adverse effects. The long-term care facility is responsible for reporting any adverse events into VAERS.
- Upon vaccination of the resident, the long-term care facility will be responsible for all reporting requirements in the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS).