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**Memorandum**

**TO:** Long-Term Care Facilities  
Pharmacies that Service Long-Term Care Facilities

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

**SUBJECT:** COVID-19 Booster Dose Vaccination Guidance

**DATE:** September 27, 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 long-term care facility residents, staff, and visitors against COVID-19 is a crucial step in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The purpose of this memorandum is to outline the roles of long-term care facilities and pharmacies in preparing for and administering COVID-19 booster doses. A “booster dose” refers to another subsequent dose of a vaccine that is given to someone who built enough protection after full vaccination, but then that protection decreased over time (this is called waning immunity). At this time, booster doses are only available to those who previously received a complete series of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine) and it has been 6 months since their second dose.

DPH is working with licensed pharmacies that service long-term care facilities to distribute COVID-19 vaccine for booster doses. On September 24, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s) recommended a single Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster dose administered at least 6 months after primary series under FDA Emergency Use Authorization for several populations, including:

- persons age 65+ and long-term care facility residents
- individuals 18-64 years of age who are at increased risk for COVID-19 because of occupational or institutional settings

Based on the CDC recommendation, long-term care facilities should work to ensure that all of their eligible residents and staff receive their COVID-19 vaccine booster dose.

Pharmacies will be distributing COVID-19 vaccine booster doses to their long-term care facility clients and have indicated that they have the capacity to store and allocate vaccine. Some long-term care facilities have reported to their pharmacy partner that they need support in administering booster doses to their staff and residents onsite; DPH has identified resources to help vaccinate either through the long-term care pharmacy or the Rapid Response Team (RRT).

### **Long-term Care Facilities Choosing Self-Vaccination of COVID-19 Booster Doses:**

To provide flexibility in terms of the timing of the administration of booster doses, long-term care facilities may elect to vaccinate their staff and residents. Long-term care facilities that are storing any COVID-19 vaccine onsite prior to administering to residents or staff should review and complete the Vaccine Management Standard Operating Procedure found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-vaccine-management-standard-operating-procedure-sop-template/download>

Long-term care facilities that choose to act as the vaccinator for their residents and staff should complete booster dose administration to all eligible individuals no later than October 31, 2021.

### **Planning for Vaccination of COVID-19 Booster Doses:**

To prepare and plan for vaccination of COVID-19 boost doses for residents and staff, all long-term care facilities should:

- Communicate to their pharmacy partner how many eligible residents and staff they estimate will be receiving booster doses if they have not already done so.
- Ensure that the medical director or another licensed independent provider has signed Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination and Emergency Management Standing Orders and they are readily available.
- Have copies of the Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) or Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) Fact Sheet for Recipients and screening form for each staff member or resident being vaccinated.
  - The current screening form may be found here (Note only page 1 is needed): <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/pre-vaccination-screening-form.pdf>
  - An updated VIS or EUA Fact Sheet for Recipients will be available once ACIP provides their recommendations. The latest versions can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/eua/index.html>
- Print Vaccine Administration Record to track vaccines given to residents and staff. An example may be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/immunization-clinic-vaccine-administration-record/download>
- Confirm PPE is available for any vaccinators, including pharmacy staff or RRT coming onsite (eye protection and facemask)
- Ensure that the following supplies are available:
  - Sharp containers

- Writing utensil
- Gloves
- Bandages
- Chux
- Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR)
- Sani-wipes or other surface cleaning supply
- Emergency- kit (Epi-pens and Benadryl)
- Blood pressure cuff and stethoscope
- Trash receptacle
- Verify each resident and staff member's first two doses of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are in MIIS and their vaccination cycle was completed 6 months.

**Immediately prior to Booster Vaccination or the Day Before the Booster Vaccine Clinic:**

- Ensure the resident or staff member's CDC screening form is completed (one per individual being vaccinated) and vaccination card or MA Immunization Information System (MIIS) vaccination status is readily available.
- Set up a location for the vaccinator (either the long-term care facility, pharmacy or RRT staff) to prepare and administer the COVID-19 booster dose. Residents may be administered vaccine in their rooms if they can be directly observed for 15-30 minutes afterwards.
- Create a space for staff to be vaccinated. Mark socially distanced spots for staff to sit for the observation period following vaccination.

**At the time of Booster Vaccination or Day of Vaccine Clinic:**

- Ensure vaccination cards/MIIS verification are in place for everyone who will be receiving their booster dose.
- Ensure that the CDC screening form is completed prior to receiving the booster dose.
- Provide a space for the vaccinator to reconstitute the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and administer the booster dose. A quick reference guide is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/pfizer/downloads/prep-and-admin-summary.pdf>
- Provide the vaccinator (either the long-term care facility, pharmacy or RRT staff) with a rolling cart (if they are going to administer the vaccine on different units) or a table (if vaccine will be administered in a central location) and the following supplies:
  - Sharp containers
  - Writing utensil
  - Gloves
  - Bandages
  - Blue chux
  - Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR)
  - Sani-wipes or other surface cleaning supply
  - Emergency- kit (Epi-pens and Benadryl)

- Blood pressure cuff and stethoscope
- Trash receptacle
- If vaccine is being administered in a central location, ensure social distancing can be maintained.
- Once vaccine is administered, there will be a 15 or 30-minute observation time to ensure there are no adverse events. The long-term care facility and pharmacy or RRT, if appropriate, should determine who is responsible for observing the resident(s) and staff.
- The vaccinator (either the long-term care facility, pharmacy or RRT) will complete the vaccination card for the resident and fill out the Clinic Vaccination Administration Record (VAR) with the booster dose information (lot information, expiration date, etc.) The facility will be asked to make a copy of the VAR for their records.

Report vaccine side effects to FDA/CDC Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). The VAERS toll-free number is 1-800-822-7967 or online reporting is available at the following page: <https://vaers.hhs.gov/reportevent.html>

If adverse reaction occurs, the long-term care facility is responsible for reporting to VAERS:

- Information you need to complete a VAERS form:
  - Patient information (age, DOB, sex)
  - Vaccine information (Pfizer, dosage, lot number, expiration date)
  - Date, time, and location administered
  - Date and time when adverse event(s) started
  - Symptoms and outcome
  - Provider's contact information

### **After Vaccine Administration**

Input vaccination data in the MIIS database within 24 hours of administration. Facilities may choose to upload the spreadsheet found in Appendix A if they have vaccinated multiple individuals. Instructions for how to upload a clinic roster may be found here:

[https://resources.misresourcecenter.com/trainingcenter/Clinic%20Rosters\\_Mini%20Guide.pdf](https://resources.misresourcecenter.com/trainingcenter/Clinic%20Rosters_Mini%20Guide.pdf)

Please review step-by-step attachment regarding how to input residents' information.

Pharmacies and long-term care facilities that will be vaccinating their residents and staff should review the Weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Bulletin and comply with its contents. The most recent bulletin may be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-covid-19-vaccine-program-mcvp-guidance-for-vaccine-providers-and-organizations#weekly-provider-bulletins->

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>.