

COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Guidance Congregate Care and Shelter Providers

Updated: January 12, 2021

Overview

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), in coordination with the COVID-19 Command Center and in collaboration with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) and state agencies, is deploying COVID-19 vaccines for congregate care and shelter providers. This document, the “*COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Guidance for Congregate Care and Shelter Providers*”, provides key planning and operational considerations as well as vaccine deployment options for organizations that operate these congregate and shelter programs. All planning is in alignment with the Massachusetts [Vaccination Advisory Group](#) principles for COVID-19 vaccine administration.

Congregate care and shelter programs are included in [Phase One of vaccine deployment](#) in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Vaccination of staff and residents over the age of 16 is expected to begin the week of January 18th. Please see [here](#) for general information and [here](#) for a vaccine provider FAQ.

At this time, the vaccination options for staff and residents over the age of 16 are:

1. Organizations that have the appropriate clinical capabilities may apply to directly receive and administer COVID-19 vaccines;
2. Organizations may leverage existing pharmacy partnerships or an existing relationship with a medical provider; or
3. Schedule an appointment at a provider location or a Mass Vaccination Site. A list of locations can be found [here](#). Additional mass vaccination sites, provider sites and pharmacy sites will continue to launch in the coming weeks.

To learn more about the currently available COVID-19 vaccines, please visit the CDC websites on the [Moderna](#) and [Pfizer](#) vaccines. **The Moderna vaccine may be administered to individuals 18 and older; and the Pfizer vaccine may be administered to individuals 16 and older.** Both vaccines require two doses for an individual to be fully vaccinated. It is critical that the second dose be the same as the first dose. Individuals must receive their second dose from the location that they received their first dose.

This guidance document is applicable to organizations that operate residential congregate care programs, which includes but is not limited to: group homes, residential treatment programs, community-based acute residential treatment programs, and clinical stabilization service programs funded, operated, licensed, and/or regulated by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Youth Services (DYS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), and the Massachusetts

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Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). Additionally, this guidance applies to emergency shelter programs, including individual and family homeless shelters, domestic violence and sexual assault shelters, Veterans' shelters, including those funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development, and approved private special education schools which offer residential services and are approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Please see Appendix A for a list of eligible provider organizations.

For the purposes of this guidance, "staff" includes all persons, paid or unpaid, working or volunteering at each of the congregate care and shelter program physical locations, who have the potential for exposure to residents or to infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air.

Communication

Programs should communicate in advance to residents, guardians and staff about the vaccine and vaccine administration process. Resources to share include [the COVID-19 vaccine FAQ](#) and [the COVID-19 vaccine distribution timeline](#).

Vaccine Deployment Options

To facilitate deployment of multi-dose vaccines to residents/clients and staff in congregate care and shelter settings, several options are available for those programs not included in the Federal Pharmacy Partnership program (FPPP) with CVS and Walgreens. Some combination of the options below may be necessary for a program to vaccinate residents and staff.

Option #1: Program "Self-Administration"

Organizations that have the capability to directly receive and administer COVID-19 vaccines can request vaccine from the Department of Public Health after meeting the following requirements. This option is likely to be the most convenient for your staff and residents and the quickest method for them to obtain the vaccine. Self-administering organizations must plan to vaccinate 200 individuals. However, the scale can be achieved by partnering with other organizations.

1. Review the [DPH Guide for Applying to Administer the COVID-19 Vaccine](#).
2. Onboard to DPH's Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS) and enroll in the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program (MCVP).
 - a. If your site is not fully registered and on-boarded to submit vaccine-administered data to the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS), email the MIIS at miishelpdesk@mass.gov.

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- b. If you did not receive the Massachusetts COVID-19 Program (MCVP) Enrollment Form contact the MDPH Vaccine Unit at dph-vaccine-management@massmail.state.ma.us.
3. Identify a practitioner to write a [Standing Order for Administering Vaccine](#); and
 - Have [freezer/refrigeration storage capacity](#) to store the Moderna vaccine.
 - Have the organizational capacity to vaccinate individuals and staff, including [approved health care personnel](#) to serve as vaccinators and to observe individuals post-vaccine.
4. Adhere to screening, onsite protocols, consent, tracking and second dose guidance.

Option #2: Leverage Existing Pharmacy Partnerships or other Medical Provider Relationships

Programs may have existing pharmacy partnerships through regular flu vaccine clinics, and/or other existing relationships with local hospitals, health care practices, community health centers, university health centers, or VNAs, and these partnerships may be leveraged to administer COVID-19 vaccines. Programs are encouraged to contact existing health care partners to determine if they have the capacity to operate a vaccine clinic or mobile vaccine distribution. If you identify a clinical partner your agency contact can work with DPH to ensure your clinical partner is allocated vaccine.

Option #3: Mass Vaccination Sites

In the next few weeks, the Commonwealth will launch Mass Vaccination sites and expects additional provider and pharmacy vaccination sites to launch. Vaccination sites will be posted [here](#). Sites will require appropriate identification to establish you meet the congregate care prioritization criteria. Appropriate identification for both staff and residents using Mass Vaccination sites includes a letter from the organization and an employee identification card – or- state / federal issued identification.

Organizations should provide staff and residents with a letter verifying that the individual meets Phase 1 Residential Congregate Care and Shelter eligibility guidelines as specified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The eligibility letters should:

- Be on organizational letterhead
- Identify the individual by name
- Identify vaccine locations and direct the individual to additional information on the mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine-in-massachusetts website
- Remind individuals to bring employee identification or state or federal issued identification to the site

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Note: Additional, program-specific guidance will be given for situations requiring sensitivity to protect confidentiality and other unique program considerations.

Additional avenues for local vaccine clinics and/or mobile vaccine distribution are actively being explored to support providers whose needs are not met with the options above. Additional information will be shared as it is available. Vaccination locations will be posted on the [mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine-in-massachusetts](https://www.mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine-in-massachusetts) website which will be updated regularly.

Please contact your agency point of contact if you need additional support or have questions. The point of contact for each agency will be actively engaged with providers to ensure questions are answered and any issues are coordinated, elevated, and resolved. The points of contact will work actively with providers on the options currently outlined to ensure that the providers have implementation plans for each of their congregate care and shelter settings and will also work with providers needing assistance in finding a solution.

General Operational Components

The following should be considered as providers plan for vaccine deployment:

1. Screening
 - Screen individuals for potential allergies prior to vaccination.
 - Consider using this CDC [pre-screening form](#).
2. Vaccination Administration
 - Onsite protocols
 - i. Work with residents and staff to understand vaccination timelines and develop plans to ensure that residents and staff receive second doses.
 - ii. Ensure adequate space for social distancing.
 - iii. Observe individuals for 30 minutes onsite following vaccination.
 - iv. Review [this training document](#), which includes protocols for onsite infection control.
 - v. Ensure translation of essential materials including but not limited to signage EAU forms, fact sheets etc.
 - Consent
 - i. Follow existing program practices regarding informed consent.
 - Identification
 - i. Individuals seeking vaccines should bring one of the following forms of ID:
 1. Employer-issued photo ID card that includes the name of the individual seeking vaccination
 2. Badge

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3. Letter from HR stating that the individual is a current employee of the organization AND a state photo ID or license
 4. Recent paystub AND a state photo ID or license
- Vaccination tracking
 - i. Track vaccinations, including the dates that doses are administered, in MIIS.
3. Second dose vaccination planning
 - Work with residents and staff to understand vaccination timelines and develop plans to ensure that residents and staff receive second doses.
 4. Surveillance testing
 - EOHHS [surveillance testing guidance](#) remains in place until further notice.

Agency Points of Contact

For questions regarding this guidance document or the implementation of the three vaccine deployment options – please contact:

- Department of Developmental Services – Cynthia Miller: cynthia.f.miller@mass.gov, (857) 225-8770
- Department of Children and Families – Ryan Fitzgerald: ryan.m.fitzgerald@mass.gov, (617) 680-2835
- Department of Mental Health – Beth Lucas: beth.lucas@mass.gov, (617) 927-5627
- Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Addiction Services – Therese Fleisher: therese.m.fleisher@mass.gov, (617) 645-2865
- Department of Public Health SDV Shelters – Chris Newman: Christopher.newman@mass.gov, (781) 471-0932
- Department of Veterans Services – Claire Makrinikolas: Claire.makrinikolas@mass.gov, (857) 268-1151
- Department of Youth Services – Ruth Rovezzi: ruth.rovezzi@mass.gov, (413) 265-0624
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission – Sandy Biber: sandy.biber@mass.gov, (617) 777-5909
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind – Lesli Johnson: lesli.baker.johnson@mass.gov, (857) 248-0930
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education/ Department of Early Education and Care / Special Education Residential Schools – Patti Mackin: patti.mackin@mass.gov, (781) 927-5627
- Individual & Family Congregate Shelters – Tom Brigham (DPH): thomas.brigham@mass.gov, (617) 777-5129

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Appendix A

Definition of Covered Programs

For the purposes of this guidance, “Covered Programs” include programs that meet the criteria established in one or more of the following categories:

1. Social service programs, as defined under MGL Chapter 118E Section 8A, that provide residential services at rates established under one or more of the following regulations:
 - **101 CMR 346:00:** Rates for Certain Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders Programs
 - Inpatient Services, Residential Services and Triage, Engagement and Assessment Services only
 - **101 CMR 412:00:** Rates for Family Transitional Support Services
 - **101 CMR 413:00:** Payments for Youth Intermediate-Term Stabilization Services
 - Staff Secure Residential Detention Programs, Staff Secure Residential Treatment Programs, Staff Secure Residential Revocation Programs, and Independent Living Residential Programs with clinical services
 - Caring Together Residential Placement Services, Child Specific Residential Placement Contracts, and Alternative to Lockup Residential Placement Services
 - **101 CMR 414:00:** Rates for Family Stabilization Services
 - Site-based Respite only
 - **101 CMR 418:00:** Payments for Youth Short-Term Stabilization and Emergency Placement Services
 - **101 CMR 420:00:** Rates for Adult Long-Term Residential Services
 - **101 CMR 421:00:** Rates for Adult Housing and Community Support Services
 - Safe Haven and Dual Diagnosis Shelter rates only
 - **101 CMR 426:00:** Rates for Certain Adult Community Mental Health Services
 - Supervised Group Living Environments, Supported Independent Environments and Intensive Group Living Environment Services only
 - **101 CMR 430:00:** Rates for Program of Assertive Community Treatment Services
 - Forensic GLE rate only
 - **101 CMR 431:00:** Rates for Certain Respite Services
2. The following Veteran’s shelters (parentheses list the provider’s associate vendor code):
 - Soldier On (VC6000180388)
 - Veterans Homestead Inc (VC6000179167)
 - Vets Inc (VC6000175956)

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- Vietnam Veterans Workshop (VC6000173601)
 - Montachusett Veterans Outreach Center (VC6000169663)
 - Habitat Plus, Inc (VC6000227615)
 - Veterans Northeast Outreach Center, Inc (VC6000170820)
 - Southeastern Mass Veterans Housing Program (VC6000210291)
 - Cape & Islands Veterans Outreach Center (VC6000227372)
 - Pine Street Inn (VC6000162415)
 - Bilingual Veterans Outreach Center (VC6000227405)
3. Family and individual congregate shelters contracted with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).
4. MA Approved Private Special Education Schools that provide residential services to students and are approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) under 603 CMR 28.09. Eligible organizations that operate one or more of these programs are listed below.
- Amego
 - Archway, Inc.
 - Boston Higashi School
 - Brandon Residential Treatment Center
 - Cardinal Cushing School & Training Ctr.
 - Cotting School, Inc.
 - Crystal Springs, Inc.
 - Devereux Foundation of Mass., Inc.
 - Dr. Franklin Perkins School, Inc.
 - Evergreen Center, Inc. - Milford
 - F. L. Chamberlain School, Inc.
 - Fall River Deaconess, Inc.
 - Hillcrest Educational Centers, Inc. - Pittsfield
 - Home for Little Wanderers
 - Italian Home for Children, Inc.
 - Judge Rotenberg Educational Center
 - Justice Resource Institute
 - Landmark Foundation
 - Latham Centers, Inc.
 - League School of Boston
 - Learning Ctr. for the Deaf - Framingham

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- MAB Community Services
- May Institute
- McAuley Nazareth Home for Boys
- Melmark Home, Inc.
- New England Center for Children - Southborough
- Perkins School for the Blind
- Protestant Guild for Human Services/DBA The Guild for Human Services
- Riverview School
- Saint Ann's Home, Inc.
- Seven Hills Foundation, Inc.
- Stevens Children's Home
- Walker, Inc.
- Wayside Youth and Family Support Network
- Whitney Academy, Inc

If you believe you are an eligible MA Approved Private Special Education School that provides residential services approved by DESE that is not on the list above, contact patti.mackin@mass.gov to inquire about your eligibility status.