

HEALTH ALERT NETWORK

Healthcare and Related Personnel Eligible for Phase 1a Vaccinations

In Phase 1a, vaccine allocation will be prioritized to subsets outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to include staff and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities and people serving in healthcare settings. The goal in Phase 1a is to vaccinate as many workers as possible who provide healthcare and other direct *in-person* services to patients, persons with disabilities, and persons living in congregate care settings who are at risk of exposure to the virus or who handle infectious materials. This is not related to professional licenses, but whether the worker must work in-person and could have close contact with someone who is or might be infectious or be exposed to infectious materials. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to those facilities that will vaccinate people eligible in Phase 1a. **DO NOT CONTACT HOSPITALS TO BE VACCINATED.** People included in the groups identified below as eligible for Phase 1a vaccinations should not contact any hospital or healthcare provider. Instead, contact the New Mexico Department of Health for additional information. If you work for an enrolled and approved COVID-19 provider, your employer will contact you about being vaccinated. **For all others in Phase 1a, NMDOH will publish and communicate information regarding how those who are eligible can be vaccinated.**

The state is attempting to vaccinate those who have direct contact with known COVID-positive patients and infectious materials first, but all health care providers and support staff who provide in-person healthcare in all types of health care facilities including working with persons living in congregate care settings will be eligible to receive vaccine during Phase 1a. Examples of individuals who are eligible for vaccine in Phase 1a include, but are not limited to:

- All Hospital Personnel with direct patient care
 - A wide array of medical house staff (i.e., interns, residents, fellows), nurses, nurse's aides, physical therapists (PT), physicians, physician assistants, respiratory therapists (RT), speech pathologists, students (medical, nursing, PT, RT), midwives, nutritionists, CRNA's
 - Ancillary staff directly interacting with patients or infectious materials: laboratory personnel, phlebotomists, and radiology technicians
 - Staff who provide cleaning, food and other services to support patients
 - Emergency room staff
- Medical first responders (EMS, fire department, and law enforcement personnel who provide emergency medical services and transportation) and hospital transport personnel
- Persons working in congregate settings, including correctional facilities, juvenile justice facilities, shelters, residential treatment centers, or community homes.
- Persons providing direct medical care or other in-person services in dialysis and infusion centers
- Persons providing direct medical care or other in-person services in inpatient or outpatient medical settings
- Home health and Hospice workers including home health aides, caregivers, companions
- Persons providing direct medical care or other in-person services in public health offices

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE

- Autopsy room staff, coroners, embalmers, and funeral home staff at risk of exposure to bodily fluids
- COVID-19 testing site staff
- Workers with patients undergoing chemotherapy
- Workers (including pharmacists and occupational health staff) administering COVID-19 vaccines
- Residents and workers (whether paid or volunteer) in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities (LTCFs)
 - Please note: most LTCFs in New Mexico will receive vaccination services directly from CVS and Walgreens via previous enrollment in the federal LTCF partnership program. Enrolled locations will be contacted by either Walgreens or CVS to arrange services for both LTCF staff and residents.
- Pharmacists and pharmacy technicians who interact with patients
- Persons providing direct medical care or other in-person services in primary care, family practice, behavioral health, family planning and other specialty practices
- Persons providing direct medical care or other in-person services in imaging centers
- Persons providing direct medical care or other in-person services in dental and optometry or ophthalmology practices and other related specialties
- Persons providing direct medical care or other in-person rehabilitation services, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, vocational rehabilitation, and independent living providers
- Support services providers for persons with disabilities and persons providing in-person sign language or other interpretation services for persons who communicate using sign language

Minimizing disuse of scarce COVID-19 vaccine

To avoid wastage or disuse of scarce supplies and maximize their benefit to New Mexicans:

- Doses may be allocated based on the assumption that immunization will be accepted by some but not all who are offered the vaccine, and then adjusted later based on the number of doses that are accepted
- After intensive and appropriate efforts to reach the groups prioritized at that moment, facilities may offer vaccine promptly to persons in lower priority groups when:
 - Demand subsides in the current groups, or
 - Doses are about to expire according to labeling instructions.
- Health Care Facilities may temporarily adjust prioritization based on other resource constraints while continuing efforts to immunize higher priority groups as soon as feasible.

COVID-19 Vaccine Reporting

To remain in compliance with federal reporting requirements – and to identify any Phase 1a staff who still need to be vaccinated – the state requires your assistance.

As you know, providers must use VaccineFinder to communicate with the state about vaccine inventory each day. This was part of the agreement that providers signed; future COVID-19 vaccine allocations are dependent on fulfilling this requirement.

If you are having difficulty accessing the online COVID Locating Health Provider Portal, please contact the VaccineFinder support team at vaccinefinder@castlighthealth.com immediately. If you do not

receive a response within two hours, please reach out to the NM Immunization Program team at covid.vaccines@state.nm.us for assistance. All facilities must report in VaccineFinder by Tuesday, December 22.

New Mexico also expects to distribute more vaccine this week – and to vaccinate more Phase 1a health care workers who are at high to moderate risk of contracting the virus. This includes direct and indirect health care workers caring for patients who are COVID-19-positive. If your facility has Phase 1a employees who still need to be vaccinated, please have your Chief Medical Officer email covid.vaccines@state.nm.us for guidance on the fastest way to achieve this goal.

We thank you and your staff for your ongoing collaboration.

NMDOH COVID-19 Vaccination Planning and Implementation Team