

COVID-19 VACCINE: WHAT WE KNOW TODAY | December 9, 2020

- **AHCA Pharmacy Partners FAQ:** Today, AHCA issued a very helpful [COVID Vaccine Pharmacy Partners FAQ](#) document that helps address a number of questions that have arisen over the last several days.
- **Vaccination Clinics:** According to the most recent information from the Washington State Department of Health (DOH), vaccination clinics operated by Walgreens and CVS will likely begin the week of December 27. According to the DOH, two weeks' notification to the federal government is required before the vaccination program can be "activated." Given that the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is scheduled to meet and approve the vaccine tomorrow, the two-week notification points to a Christmas Eve activation or later.
- **Walgreens:** Walgreens is still sending out information to long term care providers and should be done by the weekend. We are still waiting for contact information for providers to contact Walgreens if they have not heard from them. We understand that this information is urgently needed as anxiety among providers is rapidly increasing. Walgreen's reports that they are still updating some material before they post on their website. The [Walgreens website](#) is operational. Also, additional information on the Walgreens program can be found [here](#).
- **CVS:** CVS has already started to send their initial emails to matched facilities. They are also initiating live phone calls to facilities, so each facility should receive a phone call in the coming days. In the meantime, please update your contact information [here](#). It is critical that each facility supply updated contact information (for primary and secondary points of contact for each facility). Second, please visit their website [here](#). By clicking onto the "COVID-19 Introductory Email Communication," you can see the initial email that was distributed.
- **SNFs or AL who did not enroll** or pick CVS or Walgreens as a backup must contact the DOH to find out how or when they can get access to the vaccine. They should NOT contact CVS or Walgreens.
- **Washington to Use Pfizer Vaccine:** Yesterday, in a phone call with long term care providers, DOH reported that initially Washington State has only requested the Pfizer vaccine. DOH reported that it requested the Pfizer vaccine because it was the first to be provided and its reported side effects were fewer than the Moderna vaccine. At this juncture it is unclear whether the Moderna vaccine will be available in Washington during the first three weeks of the rollout.
- **Physician orders:** Physician orders for the vaccine are NOT required. We have confirmed that neither Walgreens nor CVS will require a physician order. Also, the HHS secretary used his authority under the Prep Act to override all state and local laws to allow pharmacists to order and administer the vaccine. "...as an Authority Having Jurisdiction under the Secretary's March 10, 2020 declaration under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act (PREP Act), the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) issues this guidance. Subject to satisfaction of the requirements listed below, this guidance authorizes State-licensed pharmacists to order and administer, and State-licensed or registered pharmacy interns acting under the supervision of the qualified pharmacist to administer, to persons ages three or older COVID-19 vaccinations that have been authorized or licensed by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)." Click [here](#) for additional information.
- **Staff Incentives:** Are financial and other incentives acceptable (e.g., gift cards, bonuses, etc.) to use with staff to encourage uptake of the vaccine? AHCA has confirmed with CMS that the agency has not issued any restrictions to encourage staff to receive the vaccine.

- **Promotional material.** AHCA met with the CDC team yesterday and they are working on a toolkit for LTC that should be out the end of this week or early next week. AHCA and the Washington State DOH are also developing some material and will use the FDA Pfizer data released today (see next item).
- **FDA EUA review.** The Pfizer background material was [released](#) yesterday and shows the vaccine is very effective including in elderly over the age of 65; and age over 75; and in minority populations. Just over 4% of the participants were over age of 75. Vaccine efficacy was equivalent in those under 55 and those over 55. The side effects look predictable for a person's immune response. For those under 55 in age, reaction at inject site (redness, soreness or swelling) were 75%; fever was about 7% after dose 1 and 30% after dose 2. Based upon this information, experts believe that this appears to be a very safe vaccine with predictable reactions to a vaccine stimulating the immune response to make antibodies. The pattern was nearly identical in elderly over the age 55 but the actual rates were slightly different. There were 6 deaths in the trial: 2 in vaccine and 4 in placebo.

We will provide you additional information as it is made available.