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# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**DATE:** November 5, 2020

**TO:** Licensed Assisted Living Facilities

**FROM:** Tara Ragland, Director  
Division of Licensing Programs

**SUBJECT:** Pharmacy Partnership for COVID-19 Vaccination, updated

### **UPDATE-November 5, 2020**

**The deadline to enroll in the Pharmacy Partnership for Long Term Care Program for COVID-19 was extended to 11/6/2020. Virginia Department of Social Services strongly encourages assisted living facilities to take advantage of this pharmacy partnership opportunity. This no cost program provides end-to-end management of the COVID-19 vaccination process, including storage, handling, cold chain management, on-site vaccinations, and fulfillment of reporting requirements. Please review the below instructions and sign up if you haven't already registered.**

This memo contains time-sensitive information on how to enroll in the no-cost Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for the COVID-19 Vaccination.

As part of a nationwide vaccination strategy, all long-term care settings are strongly encouraged to enroll in the **Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program**. Through this program, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has engaged retail pharmacy partners to secure the COVID-19 vaccine and provide on-site vaccination to residents at no cost to the facility.

On October 16, 2020, the White House announced that the Administration has signed agreements with CVS and Walgreens to provide the COVID-19 vaccine free of charge to long-term care facilities. Facilities must opt-in to take advantage of this program by **Thursday, October 29, 2020**. Assisted living facilities (ALFs) can register to enroll in the program, or opt out and indicate an alternate plan for vaccinating residents. The RedCAP registration for ALFs must be completed in one sitting at the following link: <https://redcap.link/LTCF>. Please review the attached fact sheet and FAQ document prior to filling out the form to ensure timely completion.

This program provides end-to-end management of the COVID-19 vaccination process, including storage, handling, cold chain management, on-site vaccinations, and fulfillment of reporting requirements. It will facilitate safe and effective vaccination of this patient

population while reducing burden on facilities and local health districts throughout the Commonwealth.

Please note that early in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program, there may be a limited supply of the vaccine, and vaccination efforts may focus on those critical to the response, those providing direct care, and those at highest risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19. This includes residents of ALFs.

Jurisdictions, pharmacies, and the CDC will work closely together to coordinate, track, and monitor distribution to streamline and optimize efforts. The CDC recognizes the importance of accurate data on vaccine distribution and dispensing to help jurisdictions make informed planning decisions. The CDC will work closely with jurisdictions to identify any gaps that may not be filled by the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program and additional strategies that may help address those gaps.

Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program information for ALFs is being posted to the VDH COVID-19 Vaccination Response [website](#). If you have additional questions about the program, please email Brenden Rivenbark at [brenden.rivenbark@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:brenden.rivenbark@vdh.virginia.gov).

The Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program offers safe, efficient, cost-effective access to the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it becomes available. We strongly encourage and appreciate your timely enrollment in this program.

## Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for COVID-19 Vaccination

CDC is partnering with CVS and Walgreens to offer on-site COVID-19 vaccination services for residents of nursing homes and assisted living facilities once vaccination is recommended for them.

The **Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care (LTC) Program** provides end-to-end management of the COVID-19 vaccination process, including cold chain management, on-site vaccinations, and fulfillment of reporting requirements, to facilitate safe vaccination of this patient population, while reducing burden on LTC facilities and jurisdictional health departments. The services will be available in rural areas that may not have easily accessible pharmacies. LTCF staff who have not received COVID-19 vaccine can also be vaccinated as part of the program.

As part of this program, which is free of charge to facilities, the pharmacy will:

- Schedule and coordinate on-site clinic date(s) directly with each facility. Three visits over approximately two months will likely be needed to administer both doses of vaccine and vaccinate any new residents and staff.
- Order vaccines and associated supplies (e.g., syringes, needles, personal protective equipment).
- Ensure cold chain management for vaccine.
- Provide on-site administration of vaccine.
- Report required vaccination data (approximately 20 data fields) to the local, state/territorial, and federal jurisdictions within 72 hours of administering each dose.
- Adhere to all applicable Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) COVID-19 testing requirements for LTCF staff.

If interested in participating, LTCFs should sign up (or opt out) starting October 19. Sign up will remain open for two weeks.

- Skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) will make their selection through the [National Healthcare Safety Network](#) (NHSN). An “alert” will be incorporated into the NHSN LTCF COVID-19 module to guide users to the form.
- Assisted living facilities (ALFs) will make their selection via an online [REDcap](https://redcap.link/lpcf) (<https://redcap.link/lpcf>) sign-up form.
- Facilities will indicate which pharmacy partner (one of two large retail pharmacies or existing LTC pharmacy) they prefer to have on site.
- Online sign-up information will be distributed through ALF and SNF partner communication channels (email, social media, web).
- Indicating interest in participating is non-binding and facilities may change their selection or opt in or out via email after the online survey closes.

Once the sign-up period has closed, no changes can be made via the online form, and the facility must coordinate directly with the selected pharmacy provider to change any requested vaccination supplies and services.

CDC will communicate preferences to CVS and Walgreens and will try to honor facility preferences but may reassign facilities depending on vaccine availability and distribution considerations and to minimize vaccine wastage.

CDC expects the program services to continue on site at participating facilities for approximately two months. After the initial phase of vaccinations, each facility can choose to continue working with CVS or Walgreens or can work with a pharmacy provider of its choice.

For questions about the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care Program, please contact [eocevent494@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent494@cdc.gov).

## Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for COVID-19 Vaccination

### *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)*

**1. Can our facility obtain COVID-19 vaccine through our usual pharmacy and administer it ourselves like we do for influenza vaccine?**

Yes, however, most of the COVID-19 vaccines currently in late-stage testing have stricter cold chain requirements than seasonal influenza vaccine, including requirements for some vaccines to be frozen. Additionally, each vaccine has different mixing requirements for administration and minimal interval requirements for a second dose, if indicated. Reporting requirements for COVID-19 vaccines will also be stricter than those for seasonal influenza vaccine. Anyone who administers COVID-19 vaccine is required to enroll as a vaccination provider and report individual-level administration data to the appropriate state, territorial, local, or federal jurisdiction once the vaccine has been administered. For facilities opting into the pharmacy partnership program, the pharmacy partner would be responsible for procuring vaccine, cold chain management, administration to residents (and staff who have not yet been vaccinated), and fulfillment of all reporting requirements to public health authorities on behalf of the facility.

**2. How do I sign up for the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for COVID-19 Vaccination?**

Nursing homes can sign up via the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN; <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/index.html>) and assisted living facilities can sign up via an online survey (<https://redcap.link/LTCF>) starting October 19 and remaining open for two weeks.

**3. Why are facilities being asked to consider the LTC pharmacy partnership program for vaccination of LTCF residents?**

CDC is partnering with pharmacies to offer on-site COVID-19 vaccination services for nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care (LTC) Program provides end-to-end management of the COVID-19 vaccination process, including cold chain management, on-site vaccinations, and fulfillment of reporting requirements, to facilitate safe vaccination of this patient population, while reducing burden on facilities and jurisdictional health departments.

**4. Can staff at my facility get vaccinated via this program?**

It is possible that staff will be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccine earlier than LTCF residents as part of a recommendation for vaccination for healthcare personnel, including those in LTCFs. Any staff member who was not already vaccinated could be vaccinated through these on-site clinics; however, we strongly encourage staff to be vaccinated as soon as they are eligible, which may occur through mobile clinics and clinics run by health departments for healthcare personnel.

**5. Our facility has their own pharmacy, are we required to participate in the LTC pharmacy partnership program for vaccine distribution?**

No, you are not required to participate in this program. A facility can opt to have vaccine supply and management services coordinated by a pharmacy provider of their choice or opt in at a later time by emailing [eocevent494@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent494@cdc.gov) to sign up if after the online form has closed. If an LTCF opts out of the pharmacy partnership program, the LTCF and the pharmacy provider of their choice are responsible for coordination of and adherence to all vaccine supply chain, storage, handling, administration, and reporting requirements, including strict cold chain and public health reporting requirements.

## Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for COVID-19 Vaccination

**6. Can a combination of options be selected? For example, can we have some vaccination services be provided by our own pharmacy provider and some by the pharmacy partnership program.**

Initially, a combination of options will not be possible. We are asking facilities to select a single option to facilitate efficient distribution of vaccine. We expect the pharmacy partnership services to continue on-site at the facility for approximately 2 months.

**7. How would new LTCF residents be vaccinated?**

After the initial phase of vaccinations, the facility can choose to continue to work with the pharmacy that provided their initial on-site clinics for additional doses or can choose to work with a pharmacy provider of their choice. Depending on vaccine supply, facilities may want to work with local hospitals to ensure residents have received their first dose before being discharged. Similarly, facilities may ask new admissions from the community to get vaccinated before admission.

**8. What costs are we responsible for if we choose to participate in the pharmacy partnership program?**

There will be no costs to the LTCF for participation in the pharmacy partnership program. It is anticipated that participating pharmacies will bill public and private insurance for the vaccine administration fees.

**9. If the facility chooses its own pharmacy provider, will that pharmacy provider receive a payment for administering the vaccine?**

Yes, it is anticipated that pharmacy providers will bill public and private insurance for the vaccine administration fees.

**10. If the facility chooses its own pharmacy provider, what data will the facility or pharmacy have to report?**

To administer COVID-19 vaccine, providers will need to sign a provider agreement, which requires reporting of specific data elements once vaccine has been administered. Required elements are: Administered at location: facility name/ID; administered at location: type; administration address (including county); administration date; CVX (Product); dose number; recipient ID\*; vaccination event ID; lot Number: Unit of Use and/or Unit of Sale; MVX (Manufacturer); recipient address\*; recipient date of birth\*; recipient name\*; recipient sex; sending organization; vaccine administering provider suffix; vaccine administering site (on the body); vaccine expiration date; vaccine route of administration; vaccination series complete.

**11. When is the deadline for choosing to participate in the LTC pharmacy partnership program?**

It is anticipated that the survey will open on October 19, 2020 and remain open for two weeks. During that time, the facility can make a change to their choice of pharmacy provider (e.g., select to participate in the pharmacy partnership program, but later opt out). However, after the form closes, no changes can be made via the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) or the online form and the facility will have to coordinate directly with the pharmacy provider selected to make any changes regarding vaccination supply and services.

**12. Our facility is not enrolled in NHSN. Do we have to enroll in NHSN to indicate our options for vaccine supply?**

## Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for COVID-19 Vaccination

A nursing home or skilled nursing facility must be enrolled in the NHSN LTCF COVID-19 module to be able to make a selection of COVID-19 vaccine pharmacy providers. Please follow the enrollment steps here: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltc/covid19/enroll.html>. Assisted living facilities wishing to participate should visit <https://redcap.link/LTCF>.

### **13. Who do we contact if we have problems with our vaccine supply?**

For facilities that opt to participate in the pharmacy partnership program, please contact CVS or Walgreens directly if you encounter any issues. For facilities that opt out of the pharmacy partnership program, please contact the pharmacy provider of your choice or your jurisdiction's health department.

### **14. Is Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) mandating residents to be vaccinated with COVID-19 vaccine?**

Not at this time. Please refer to CMS directly for requirements around COVID-19 vaccine in LTCFs.

### **15. Who should I reach out to if I have additional questions?**

For questions specific to the pharmacy partnership program for LTCFs, please contact [eocevent494@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent494@cdc.gov). For other questions about COVID-19 vaccine, please contact: XXX.