



# ALEXANDRIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## Communicable Disease Division

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## December 9, 2020 - HEALTH UPDATE 24 – COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization, Delivery, and Education

Dear Partners in Health,

As you are aware, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) convened on December 3, 2020, and have issued the following:

**ACIP recommends that when a COVID-19 vaccine is authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and recommended by ACIP, vaccination in the initial phase of the COVID-19 vaccination program (Phase 1a) should be offered to both 1) health care personnel (HCP)\* and 2) residents of long-term care facilities (LTCFs). For details visit: [https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6949e1.htm?s\\_cid=mm6949e1\\_w](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6949e1.htm?s_cid=mm6949e1_w)**

*\*Health care personnel are defined as paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials. Long-term care facility residents are defined as adults who reside in facilities that provide a variety of services, including medical and personal care, to persons who are unable to live independently.*

The rationale for dedicating the initial distribution phase to healthcare personnel follows:

- Health care settings are high-risk locations for SARS-CoV-2 exposure and transmission.
- As of December 1, 2020, approximately 245,000 COVID-19 cases and 860 COVID-19-associated deaths have been reported among U.S. health care personnel.
- Early protection of HCP is critical to preserve capacity to care for patients with COVID-19 or other illnesses.
- HCP are also at risk for transmitting the virus to medically-vulnerable patients, as seen with long-term care facility outbreaks.

Sources: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/covid-19/evidence-table.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/covid-19/clinical-considerations.html>

In Virginia, the first shipment of vaccines is expected to be received from Pfizer in mid-December.

- Pfizer vaccines will require ultracold storage (negative 70 degrees Celsius).
- All 72,150 initial doses will be distributed directly to geographically diverse health care systems with ultracold storage capacity (such as hospital systems and local health departments), and will go to HCP.
  - HCP that directly care for COVID-19 patients will receive top priority among HCP
- Subsequent weekly shipments are expected to begin after the initial shipment and will be divided among HCP and LTCF residents.
  - Health care systems and public health will ensure access to vaccination for all HCP and LTCF residents equitably across the entire state.
  - The majority of LTCF in Virginia will receive vaccinations from CVS and Walgreens' teams onsite through a federal CDC-pharmacy-LTCF partnership.

Source: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/news/2020-news-releases/virginias-covid-19-vaccination-priorities-announced/>

As COVID-19 vaccination is becoming a reality, we recognize members of your practice may be asking questions about the vaccine development process. We want to present the following points for your reference:

### **Operation Warp Speed**

- The vaccine development process is being led by Operation Warp Speed (OWS), a partnership among components of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), and the Department of Defense (DoD).
- OWS has worked to accelerate vaccine program development, without compromising safety, efficacy, or product quality by running all streams, fully resourced, in parallel.
- Providing a heavy up-front investment and executing all FDA-required protocols for the demonstration of safety and efficacy in parallel requires taking on substantial financial risk as compared with the conventional sequential development approach, but ultimately enables the trials to proceed more quickly without increasing the product risk.
- OWS is maximizing the size of phase 3 trials (30,000 to 50,000 participants each) and consulting daily epidemiologic and disease-forecasting models to ensure the fastest path to an efficacy readout. Such large trials also increase the safety data set for each candidate vaccine.
- Source: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2027405>
- Source: <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/explaining-operation-warp-speed/index.html>

### **Phase III Results from Two mRNA Vaccines**

- The Pfizer/BioNtech vaccine (BNT162b2) demonstrates 95% effectiveness 7 days post dose 2. Phase III trials included 44,000 participants ages 12-85 years, with no serious safety concerns.
  - In the final analysis of 170 COVID-19 cases, 162 cases were in the placebo group, 8 cases were in the vaccine group.
  - Of the 10 severe COVID-19 cases that developed, 9 were in the placebo group, 1 was in the vaccine group.
- The Moderna vaccine (mRNA-1273) demonstrates 94.5% effectiveness 2 weeks post dose 2. Phase III trials included 30,000 participants ages 18 years and over, with no serious safety concerns.
  - In the interim analysis of 95 COVID-19 cases, 90 cases were in the placebo group, 5 cases were in the vaccine group
  - Of the 11 severe COVID-19 cases, all were in the placebo group
- Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2020-11/COVID-01-Bell.pdf>

**Please note the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is hosting a COVID-19 Vaccine General Education Overview for Healthcare Workers Webinar TODAY, December 9, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.**

**Meeting link:** <https://vdhoep.webex.com/vdhoep/j.php?MTID=m631efc7490b00327305216d096df8640>

**Meeting number (access code):** 132 765 0131    **Meeting password:** nmXUCAuC277

*\*\*This webinar will be recorded for future viewing. Pre-Registration Is Not Required*

We hope this information helps as you begin to have conversations with staff and patients about COVID-19 vaccinations. Thank you for your partnership and ongoing care for our communities.

Sincerely,



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