



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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Deputy Commissioner

To: DDS Private Providers

From: Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner

CC: Peter Mason, Deputy Commissioner, Katie Rock-Burns, Chief of Staff, Regional Directors, Private ARDs, ARC of CT, The Alliance

Date: December 11, 2020

Subject: **ACTION NEEDED** – COVID-19 Vaccines

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is sharing the message below from the Department of Public Health (DPH) concerning priority access to COVID-19 vaccines for direct care staff. In order to ensure that your staff are included in the planning process for vaccine distribution, **please fill out the brief survey at the link below as soon as possible and no later than Friday, December 18, 2020.**

Employers, including DDS qualified providers, play a critical role in ensuring access to the COVID-19 vaccine for their staff, and communicating about eligibility. This is particularly important during early phases like phase 1a where the state is working to vaccinate members of critical workforce sectors. Direct care staff in the DDS system (both public and private) have been identified as members of the phase 1a vaccination access group.

You will need to identify in the survey response your organization's priority group – please select "public health personnel." Once you are given the link to register your organization in the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS), you will be asked to upload a roster of your Phase 1a staff first. Information regarding the individuals you support will be submitted separately. It is our current understanding that individuals will be included in Phase 1b.

Here are the current definitions of the priority phases:

Phase 1a – In this phase, vaccine will be targeted to paid and unpaid people serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials and are unable to work from home.

Phase 1b - In this phase, vaccine will be targeted to people who play a key role in keeping essential functions of society running and cannot socially distance in the workplace, and people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, including people 65 years of age or older. *Please note that staff who can work from home should not be included in this category, unless they meet one of the other risk categories identified here.*

Phase 2 – In this phase, vaccine will be available to the general public and others who did not get the vaccine during Phase 1a and Phase 1b.

In order to make the vaccine available to staff members, the following steps should be taken:

- One representative (referred to as the “Employer Coordinator”) from each organization that employs populations eligible to receive vaccine in early access phases should [complete this survey](#).
- The representative should be an individual who has access to a roster of eligible personnel within their organization (e.g., healthcare personnel for Phase 1a).
- Completing this survey will prompt an email to be sent from the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) so the employer coordinator can register the organization. The email will not come immediately, as verification may take 24-48 hours.
- Once registered, the coordinator can upload a roster which allows eligible personnel to schedule a vaccination appointment once supply is available. The employer coordinator will also be invited to attend a training covering VAMS as well as enabling vaccine access for your workforce.

If you have questions regarding COVID-19 vaccine (Employer/Organization or Vaccine Recipient) please submit a ticket online at <https://dph-cthelpdesk.ct.gov/Ticket> and a DPH employee will respond as soon as possible.

We understand that your organization may be in receipt of multiple registration prompts like this for different subsets of your staff group (e.g. medical practitioners, ICF facilities, etc.). Please excuse any overlap of efforts, as the state works through a complex mass vaccination plan. If you need clarification, please email DDS.COVID19@ct.gov and we will do our best to return guidance.

Thank you for your prompt response to this critically important inquiry. We will continue to share as much information as we have regarding COVID-19 vaccines and appreciate your patience as the state works through mass vaccination planning.