

DHSS Press Release

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DPH ADVISES VACCINE PROVIDERS TO OFFER PFIZER BOOSTER TO ELIGIBLE DELAWAREANS

PRIORITY TO SENIORS, LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS AND THOSE AT RISK OF SEVERE COVID-19

DOVER (SEPT. 24, 2021) – The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) today announced that the state’s vaccine providers can begin administering booster doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to certain populations recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

On Wednesday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) formally voted to expand the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to allow for a booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to be administered for certain populations six months after receiving the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Boosters are not yet authorized for people who received either the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccine as there is not adequate data to support including them at this time.

CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met Thursday to provide additional guidance on who should receive a booster dose under the EUA. CDC Director Dr. Rochelle P. Walensky endorsed the advisory committee’s recommendations and also recommended a booster dose for those in high-risk occupational and institutional settings.

Based on CDC recommendations, the following people **should** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech.

- People 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings

- People aged 50–64 years with [underlying medical conditions](#), which include but are not limited to: *cancer, chronic heart, lung and kidney diseases, dementia, diabetes, down syndrome, HIV, overweight and obesity, pregnancy, organ transplants, and stroke.*

Additionally, CDC recommends the following individuals **may** also receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech.

- People aged 18–49 years with [underlying medical conditions](#) (the same categories as mentioned above), based on their individual benefits and risk
- People aged 18–64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting, *including, health care workers, teachers and day care staff, grocery workers and those in homeless shelters or prisons, among others.*

According to CDC, while data show vaccines remain effective in preventing hospitalization and severe disease, a booster shot will help provide continued protection against severe disease in these populations who are especially at risk for severe COVID-19, including those over 65, residents of long-term care facilities, and persons 50 – 64 with underlying health conditions. DPH is encouraging individuals in these most at-risk categories to seek booster vaccines first.

“We are very confident that we have enough vaccine to meet the needs of individuals who meet the criteria for a booster, as vaccine capacity is now very different than it was when COVID-19 vaccines first became available. With that said, it may take some time to offer boosters to everyone who qualifies,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “We are focusing intently on protecting Delaware’s most vulnerable and we encourage everyone to consider their own situation when heading out to receive their booster in the next few weeks.”

COVID-19 vaccine providers in Delaware may begin administering booster doses of Pfizer immediately or as soon as they are able. Members of the public who are eligible for a booster shot are recommended to seek vaccine at existing vaccine sites including pharmacies, health care providers, Federally Qualified Health Centers (for patients), and standing DPH Vaccine sites:

- Blue Hen Corporate Center: 655 S. Bay Road, Dover, DE 19901
- Georgetown Plaza: 19 Georgetown Plaza, Georgetown, DE 19947
- Canby Park: 1920 Maryland Ave., Wilmington, DE 19805
- University Plaza, 256 Chapman Road, Suite 100, Newark, DE 19702

“While making booster shots available is an important move, DPH’s focus continues to be getting more Delawareans fully vaccinated,” said Dr. Rattay. “With only half of the state’s population fully vaccinated, we still have a long way to go.”

As a reminder, Delawareans who have certain immunocompromising conditions including those who have received organ or stem cell transplants, are undergoing treatment for HIV or cancer, or who are taking medication that suppresses the immune system, are currently eligible to receive a “third dose” of either Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, if they completed their second dose at least 28 days prior.

DPH encourages providers to use their clinical judgement and to consider additional factors for their patients when determining if the person meets the qualifications for immunocompromised status and is eligible for a “third dose” of Pfizer or Moderna. These factors may include assessing patients who reside in a long-term care facility or patients of advanced age (especially those over age 85).

For a complete list of locations where vaccines are available, visit de.gov/getmyvaccine.

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