

North Carolina COVID-19 Vaccination Guide for Medical Practices

What do practices need to know now?

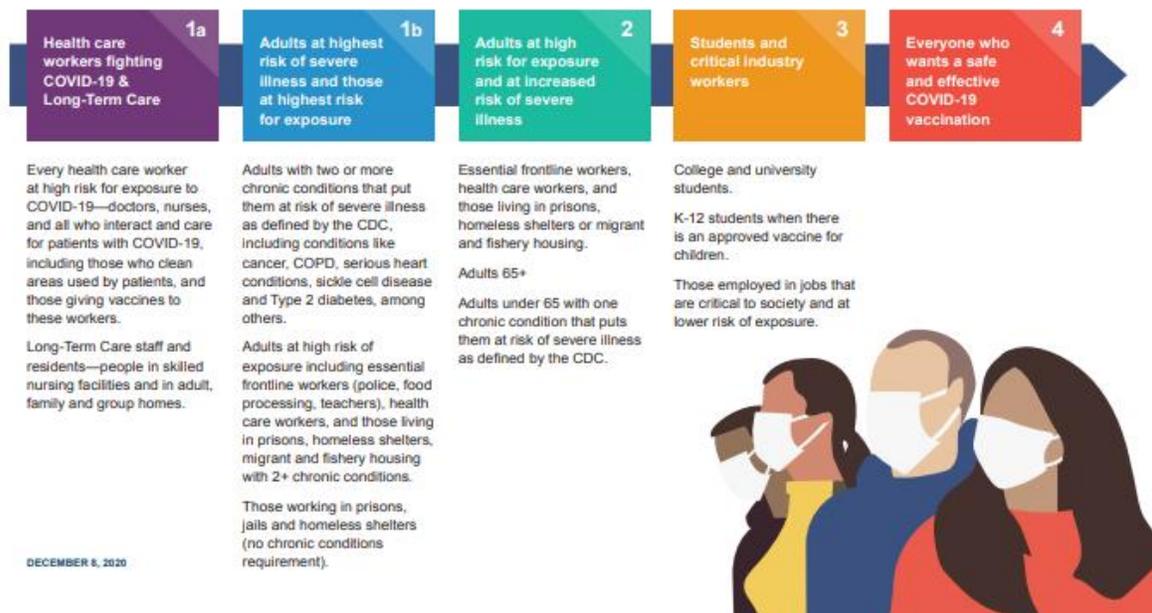
NC COVID-19 Vaccination Plan: A Four-Phased Approach

It is important to note when a vaccine is approved by the FDA for distribution, there will be limited quantities due to manufacturing. Therefore, North Carolina will have a four-phased approach to risk-based prioritization to distribute the vaccine.

COVID-19 Vaccinations: Those most at risk get it first.



A tested, safe and effective vaccine will be available to all who want it, but supplies will be limited at first. Independent state and federal public health advisory committees have determined that the best way to fight COVID-19 is to start first with vaccinations for those most at risk, reaching more people as the vaccine supply increases from January to June. Keep practicing the 3W's—wear a mask, wait six feet apart, wash your hands—until everyone has a chance to vaccinate.



COVID-19 Vaccination Management System (CVMS)

What is CVMS?

CVMS is a secure, cloud-based vaccine management solution for COVID-19 that enables vaccine management and data sharing across providers, hospitals, agencies, and local, state, and federal governments on one common platform.

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What does it help providers do?

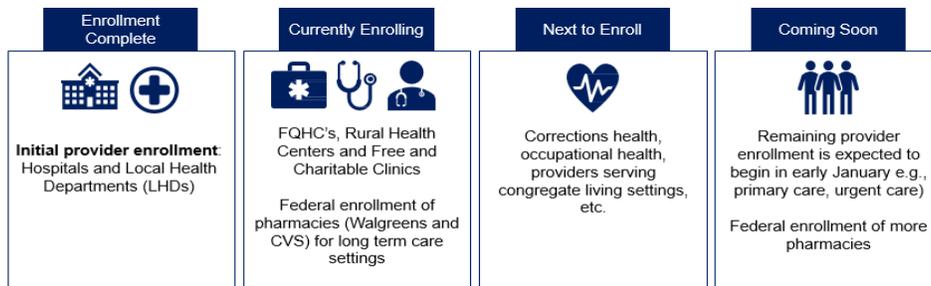
It allows providers to enroll in the COVID-19 Vaccine Program and upload employees so they can register for COVID-19 vaccination, manage the COVID-19 vaccine inventory, and track COVID-19 vaccine administration. In future CVMS releases, providers will be able to schedule clinics. Pharmacies such as CVS and Walgreens will not be using CVMS. NCDHHS provides a range of tools and methods for CVMS and vaccine training including communications, user guides, live trainings, a readiness checklist and helpdesk support [here](#).

COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Recruitment and Enrollment

How is recruitment and enrollment prioritized?

North Carolina has prioritized early outreach, recruitment and enrollment of key providers and agencies who serve populations with high risk of clinical severity and high risk of exposure. North Carolina has created a streamlined electronic process for provider enrollment applications, licensure verification, storage and handling assessments, and approval and denial letters. Enrollment of hospitals and health departments is 100%.

If you are interested in enrolling to be a COVID 19 vaccination provider, NC DHHS will announce when CVMS will be available for you to apply to become a provider of the vaccine, based on the prioritized strategy here:



NC's provider enrollment strategy is based upon [the prioritization strategy](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine Storage and Handling

How is the vaccine stored and handled?

North Carolina will assess cold-storage capacity across the state and will develop, coordinate, and support an ultra-cold chain storage system if an approved vaccine candidate requires it. This effort will be informed by guidance from Operation Warp Speed (OWS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), vaccine manufacturers, and NC state health officials.² Each vaccine has their own storage requirements, which can be reviewed on the specific vaccine fact sheet and slide 7 (Pfizer) and 18 (Moderna) of the [NCDHHS briefing primary care webinar](#).

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How are adverse events managed?

COVID-19 Vaccine Safety Monitoring Clinically important, adverse events following any vaccination must be reported by healthcare providers to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System](#) as required of all COVID-19 vaccination providers. Adverse events will also be monitored through electronic health record and claims-based systems (e.g., Vaccine Safety Datalink). The patient will also have the ability to self-report any adverse events thru [V-safe](#).

What can practices do now?

Communication to Patients is Important.

Throughout each phase of distribution, healthcare providers will have a vital role in the communication of the importance of the vaccine and helping patients to do the following:

- Trust the information that they receive from NCDHHS and local health departments about COVID-19 vaccinations
- Understand the benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccinations
- Make informed decisions about COVID-19 vaccinations
- Know how and where to get a COVID-19 vaccination

Have patient education materials available.

In order to help your patients understand more about the vaccine, consider creating or having available patient material, such as brochures, posters, phone/website messages, scripts for staff, [NCDHHS's infographic on phases of vaccine distribution](#) or [Pfizer's fact sheet for recipients and caregivers](#).

When deciding what to disseminate, consider the following:

- Be proactive. Use messages through the patient portal or mail to provide information.
- Don't frighten people into wanting to take the shot. They already fear & take COVID seriously. Acknowledge vaccine fears and hesitancy as valid.
- Give people honest information about vaccine development, testing, safety, reactions.
- Build trust in and during the prioritized vaccine rollout: Confidence to frontline workers, patience to eager early adopters, and witness to those who are waiting and seeing.
- Direct people to "their spot" for reliable information: Official sources or community/peers
- Solve for the logistics of getting people to vaccination sites that may not be connected to their everyday health experiences and health care.
- Assure everyone of equitable and inclusive access.
- Have a clear call to action that works across all campaign phases and compliments the 3W's.

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Know who on your patient panel is eligible and willing to receive the vaccine in phases 1 & 2.

- Run a list of your high-risk patients who will be eligible for the vaccine in phase 1b and 2. If you send a letter or message to these patients, inform them of their eligibility, be aware of contraindications to receiving the vaccine.
- Consider sending patients a survey asking if they plan on getting the COVID19 vaccine and where they would consider getting the vaccine. This could help you in choosing your communication and whether to administer the vaccine in your office.

Be able to communicate to patients that there is no cost.

There is no cost to patients to receive the vaccine, including those with and without insurance.

Remind patients of the 3 W's.

It is important to remind patients that until they are eligible to receive all doses of the needed vaccine, they should practice the 3 W's:



Communicate with Clinicians and Staff.

Patients will have many questions for staff and providers; the more you can answer, the more they can make the best informed decision for them.

Develop a training plan.

- Develop a training plan to educate the clinicians and staff on the following:
 - ✓ How and what communication is needed with the patient
 - ✓ Who is eligible for the vaccine in each phase
 - ✓ How a vaccine is developed, manufactured, and distributed
 - ✓ Possible side effects of the vaccine
 - ✓ The importance of equity and why some patients might be hesitant to get the vaccine
 - ✓ FAQs.
- Remain non-judgmental and acknowledge the patient's concerns.
- Identify a key point of contact for this information for the practice so that someone monitors any changes within the distribution plan and providers, staff and patients have someone to go to for questions. This person/group should review the resources listed below and attend or watch the recorded training webinars on CVMS.

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- NCDHHS has created a [readiness checklist](#) for providers to prepare for administering the COVID 19 Vaccine. If you plan on being a vaccination provider, the checklist is a tool to help you prepare now.

Understand costs and revenue opportunities for the practice.

- While there is no cost to the recipients of the vaccine, HRSA and CMS are reimbursing administrative costs. Medicare and Medicaid will be reimbursing \$16.94 for the first dose and \$28.39 for the second dose. An overview provided by NCDHHS can be found on slide 20 [here](#). HCPCS codes and ICD codes for CMS can be found [here](#).

Document vaccine administration.

- Capturing vaccines in your Electronic Health Record will help you know if your patients have had the vaccine dosage.
- Consider other multi-dose vaccinations administered in your office and how you document them (i.e. HPV, Hepatitis B, Pneumococcal). If possible, document the COVID 19 vaccination similarly.
- Ensure you are following all [ACIP documentation and administration guidelines](#) for multi-dose vaccines. If you don't have the capability to create documentation in the EHR, reach out to your vendor and request this be added.
- Additional documentation is required in COVID 19 Vaccination Management System (CVMS). Here, Providers will verify patient eligibility, log dosage administration, and track frequency and timing of additional dosages. *At this time, CVMS is not integrated with any EHR, so there will be duplicate entry.

Resources are available.

1. NCDHHS COVID 19 101 with information on 1) how a vaccine works to fight the virus 2) Vaccine testing and FDA approval phases 3) NC's plan, and 4) four phases of vaccine distribution: <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/COVID19-Vaccine-101-Deck-Final.pdf>
2. NC DHHS COVID Vaccination Plan: <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/NC-COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-with-Executive-Summary.pdf>
3. CDC COVID 19 Vaccination Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/index.html>
4. NCDHHS Covid-19 Vaccination Update: <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/COVID-19-Vaccine-Update.pdf>
5. NCDHHS COVID 19 What Providers Need to Know Webinar slides, 12.15.20: https://mega.nz/file/w1Q0FBjI#F9sHL_ALs-uY3cX0wf219CyDiSgakJoRG40NDntwNA0
6. CMS billing and coding for COVID-19 vaccines: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare/medicare-part-b-drug-average-sales-price/covid-19-vaccines-and-mono-clonal-antibodies>
7. Pfizer COVID19 Fact sheet for administrators: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144413/download>
8. Pfizer COVID19 Fact sheet for recipients and caregivers: <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>

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PRACTICE SUPPORT

For further assistance, there are 3 resources.

- If you have additional questions about the COVID-19 Vaccination Program, please email COVIDhelp@dhhs.nc.gov.
- If you have CVMS related questions, email CVMS-Help@dhhs.nc.gov.
- If you need help 1:1 assistance, please contact your local AHEC practice support coach or contact us at practicesupport@ncahec.net.

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This tool was developed by Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) Practice Support

Note that the information provided is taken directly from publicly available information provided by NC DHHS. The information provided is not legal advice and is solely educational information to assist healthcare practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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