Toolkit for Long-Term Care Facilities to Sustain COVID-19 Vaccine and Treatment Access

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide key information, resources, and guidance for long-term care facilities (LTCFs) to sustainably plan for COVID-19 vaccine and treatment access.

Previously, the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program (FRPP) for LTCFs and the Virginia LTCF Vaccine Bridge Program provided resources in Virginia to ensure that residents and staff had the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The admission of new residents, hiring of new staff, number of outbreaks, and updated recommendations for boosters continue to generate a need for ongoing LTCF vaccine and therapeutic treatment support. It is critical that LTCFs continue to leverage the growing COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutics infrastructure to ensure needs can be met efficiently.

Resources for up-to-date COVID-19 information changes frequently as more information about the virus becomes available. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) webpage linked below maintains a current list of the applicable guidance. All LTCFs should monitor this page frequently to stay abreast of the latest guidance. For more information, visit the VDH COVID-19 Long-Term Care Task Force webpage.
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Current COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone ages 6 months and older receive the COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against COVID-19 illness. The CDC recommends that everyone be up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations, which includes completing the primary series and booster dose, if eligible.

These recommendations apply to residents and staff of LTCFs. In LTC settings, exposure to and transmission of SARS-CoV-2 can occur repeatedly for extended periods of time. Healthcare personnel and other staff are in constant contact with residents therefore, it is imperative that both residents and staff in congregate settings stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations.

Approved or Authorized COVID-19 Vaccines

There are several COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or approved for use under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) in the United States to prevent COVID-19.

As of February 22, 2022, the CDC has updated its recommendations for COVID-19 vaccines with a preference for mRNA (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) vaccines over the Janssen (J&J) vaccine. However, the Janssen (J&J) vaccine may be considered in some situations. Learn more about the updated guidance on the use of the Janssen (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine here.

Additionally, the CDC updated its recommendations to include the newly authorized Novavax vaccine, as well as the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent booster vaccine. Novavax is a vaccine made differently than the mRNA vaccine, which allows for an alternative option for those hesitant to receive a mRNA vaccine. The new booster recommendation is for people ages 12 years and older to receive one bivalent mRNA booster after completion of a monovalent primary series; it replaces all prior booster recommendations for this age group. For more information regarding Novavax or bivalent boosters, visit the FDA Fact sheet for Novavax, Moderna bivalent booster, Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent booster.

Facilities should follow CDC COVID-19 Interim Clinical Considerations on the use of COVID-19 vaccines, including vaccination schedules. The figures below may be used for quick reference. For more information regarding COVID-19 vaccines for special populations including people who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or homebound, visit the CDC Recommendations on Special Populations.

Last Updated 9/2022
COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule for People who are NOT Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised

People ages 6 months through 4 years

- Moderna
  - Primary
  - In 4-6 weeks

- Pfizer-BioNTech
  - Primary
  - In 3-6 weeks

People ages 5 through 11 years

- Moderna
  - Primary
  - In 4-6 weeks

- Pfizer-BioNTech
  - Primary
  - In at least 8 weeks

People ages 12 years and older

- Moderna
  - Primary
  - In 4-6 weeks

- Pfizer-BioNTech
  - Primary
  - In at least 5 months

- Moderna, Novavax, or Pfizer-BioNTech
  - Primary
  - Bivalent booster* In 3-8 weeks (Novavax, Pfizer) OR in 4-8 weeks (Moderna)

People ages 18 years and older who previously received Janssen primary series dose

- Primary
  - Bivalent booster*
  - In at least 2 months

*The bivalent booster dose is administered at least 2 months after completion of the primary series. For people who previously received a monovalent booster dose(s), the bivalent booster dose is administered at least 2 months after the last monovalent booster dose.

Persons 18 years or older are encouraged to receive the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine if they are not able to receive another vaccine. See https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/vac/janssen-covid-19-vaccine-guidance/

COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule for People who are Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised

People ages 6 months through 4 years

- Moderna
  - Primary
  - In 4 weeks

- Pfizer-BioNTech
  - Primary
  - In at least 4 weeks

People ages 5 through 11 years

- Moderna
  - Primary
  - In 4 weeks

- Pfizer-BioNTech
  - Primary
  - In at least 8 weeks

People ages 12 years and older

- Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech
  - Primary
  - Bivalent booster*
  - In 3 weeks (Pfizer) OR in 4 weeks (Moderna)

- Novavax
  - Primary
  - Bivalent booster*
  - In 3 weeks

People ages 18 years and older who previously received Janssen primary series dose

- Primary
  - Addl. mRNA dose
  - In at least 2 months

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LTCF Guidance for COVID-19 Vaccine Access

LTCFs are recommended to use their regular facility-pharmacy operations to acquire the COVID-19 vaccine for their residents and/or staff. LTCFs should maintain open and constant communication with their contracted pharmacy providers to discuss meeting COVID-19 vaccine needs moving forward, including boosters. The VDH has developed two options for easy access to COVID-19 vaccines (Table 1).

Table 1. LTCF Options for Accessing COVID-19 Vaccines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option #1</th>
<th>Enroll as a COVID-19 Vaccine Provider with VDH</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>With this option, LTCFs can:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Option #2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Receive vaccines, as needed, from VDH</td>
<td><strong>Dispensing Agreement with LTC Pharmacy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Participate in the Small Shipment Redistribution Program (SSRP), to receive smaller quantities of Pfizer vaccine doses</td>
<td><strong>With this option, LTCFs:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Administer COVID-19 vaccines to residents and staff</td>
<td>- <strong>Enter into an agreement</strong> with the LTC pharmacy, where the pharmacy delivers vaccines to unenrolled providers for administration by facility clinical staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Report vaccine administration data into the Virginia Immunization Information System (VIIS)⁴</td>
<td>- <strong>Provide vaccine administration information back to the pharmacy for logging into VIIS</strong>¹</td>
</tr>
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</table>

This option optimally positions LTCFs to support ongoing COVID-19 vaccine needs over the long term. The VDH encourages all LTCFs with medical staff onsite to enroll as COVID-19 Vaccine Providers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option #2</th>
<th>Dispensing Agreement with LTC Pharmacy</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To qualify for enrollment as a COVID-19 Vaccine Provider, a facility must:</strong></td>
<td><strong>This option is best for LTCFs who are unable to enroll as COVID-19 Vaccine Providers because they do not meet the requirements to do so, that is:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have medical staff onsite who routinely administer vaccines or injectables to their residents</td>
<td>- LTCFs who DO NOT have medical staff onsite who routinely administer vaccines or injectables to their residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Have the administrative capability to report vaccine administration data in the VIIS⁴ within 24 hours of administration (a CDC requirement)</td>
<td>- LTCFs who DO NOT have the administrative capability to report vaccine administration data in the VIIS⁴ within 24 hours of administration (a CDC requirement)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If you meet the qualifications mentioned above:**
- **Enroll as a COVID-19 Vaccine Provider here**
- For more information, visit the VDH Provider Enrollment Process Flow & Checklist
- For questions about provider enrollment, please visit the Enrollment website.
- For VIIS-related questions, you may contact the VIIS Help Desk via phone at 1-866-375-9795 or email using viis_helpdesk@vdh.virginia.gov

**If you meet the qualifications mentioned above:**
- To enter into a dispensing agreement LTCFs must connect with their LTC Pharmacy Provider to make arrangements
- If your pharmacy indicates an inability to meet your ongoing needs, and you do not meet the requirements to enroll as a vaccine provider, please contact your local health district.
- If you are not able to contact your LHD, please email the VDH pharmacy team at COVIDPharmacySupport@vdh.virginia.gov

1 - VIIS is a free statewide registry system which combines immunization histories for persons of all ages from both the public and the private sector. The goal of VIIS is to support individuals, families, and clinicians in making the best health decisions by providing a statewide, readily accessible, and reliable Immunization Information System.

**NOTE:** If you do NOT have a contracted pharmacy provider, it is critical that you begin to make local arrangements for ongoing vaccine support. Normal channels should be used in all possible cases; other vaccine procedures (influenza, shingles, pneumococcal, etc.) can be used as a model. Pharmacy partners have shared off-site clinic request links where LTCFs are able to request assistance directly from a pharmacy. For more information, visit the CDC LTC website.
As of March 2022, the majority of Virginia’s LTCFs have yet to enroll. Many are being served via a dispensing agreement with their pharmacy. Over time, VDH encourages all LTCFs with medical staff onsite to enroll as COVID-19 Vaccine Providers.

**Options for LTC Staff and Residents Who are Mobile**

- Locate and/or schedule a COVID-19 appointment using [Vaccine Finder](https://vaccinefinder.vdh.virginia.gov)
- For help scheduling an appointment, call 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682)
- If your facility does not already provide transportation, consider [arranging transportation](https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19/vaccine-transportation/) from your facility to your COVID-19 vaccine appointment site
- Facilities may call 1-800-677-116 for more information on transportation for older adults and people with disabilities
- Contact the Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL) for support in getting people with disabilities vaccinated, at 1-888-677-1199 or [DIAL@usaginganddisability.org](mailto:DIAL@usaginganddisability.org)

**Current COVID-19 Therapeutics Recommendations**

COVID-19 therapeutics can either help prevent or treat COVID-19 virus in certain high-risk individuals. Treating these individuals early can reduce the risk of hospitalization or death from severe COVID-19, in turn reducing the strain on the healthcare system. Providers are encouraged to discuss possible treatments and develop a treatment plan with high risk individuals before they become positive with COVID-19. Neither pre-exposure prophylaxis or COVID-19 treatments replace vaccines. Vaccination remains the most important tool to control the pandemic.

**Approved or Authorized COVID-19 Treatments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication</th>
<th>Route of Administration</th>
<th>When should I take it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monoclonal antibodies</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>for prophylaxis (prevention before exposure)</td>
<td>Injection into muscle</td>
<td>Once, then every 6 months*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tixagevimab/cilgavimab (EVUSHELD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monoclonal antibodies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for treatment of mild to moderate illness</td>
<td>Infusion into vein</td>
<td>Within 7 days of symptoms starting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebtelovimab</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antivirals for treatment of mild to moderate illness</strong></td>
<td>Infusion into vein</td>
<td>Within 7 days of symptoms starting (Remdesivir)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remdesivir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmaltelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid)</td>
<td>Oral tablet</td>
<td>Within 5 days of symptoms starting (Paxlovid, Molnupiravir)</td>
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<td>Molnupiravir (Lagevrio)</td>
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LTCF Guidance for COVID-19 Therapeutics Access

To ensure that LTCFs maintain therapeutic access, the VDH has developed two options for accessing COVID-19 Therapeutics. LTCFs can utilize the COVID-19 Treatment Locator Tool to find monoclonal antibody administration and oral antiviral dispensing sites.

1) Enroll as a COVID-19 therapeutics provider to order and administer monoclonal antibodies
2) Send prescriptions to LTCF pharmacy (if applicable) to obtain oral antivirals. If you do not have a LTCF pharmacy, most retail pharmacies carry oral antivirals.

Health District: COVID-19 Vaccine Points of Contact

It is important that every LTCF in Virginia utilize all available normal channels, as outlined above, to secure vaccine access. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the primary point of contact for the LTCF is the LHD. LHD staff can assist facilities in resolving issues with their normal channels or, if all else fails, may be able to assist directly with vaccine supply.

If your city/county is not included in the list, you may visit the Local Health Districts Directory to identify your health district and may utilize your health districts webpage to find useful information, or contact them for assistance.

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