

Purpose

The purpose of this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is to provide a succinct and centralized repository of answers for received inquiries pertaining to COVID-19 vaccinators.

Terms and Definitions to Know:

What/Who is a “Prescriber”?

Pursuant to VA Code §§ [54.1-3303](#) and [54.1-3408](#), a prescriber is a practitioner who is authorized to issue a prescription. (Ex. MD, DO, NP, PA)

What is a “Standing Order”?

Standing orders allow for the facilitation of timely interventions and the removal of barriers to care for various patient populations. Standing orders are the signed instructions of a provider authorized by state law to prescribe the medical treatment and/or pharmaceutical regimen (i.e., COVID-19 vaccinations). Standing orders describe the parameters of specified situations under which the designated members of the health care team (e.g., nurses or other non-physician licensed health professionals) may act to carry out specific orders for a patient presenting with needs addressed in the standing orders. They outline the assessment and interventions that the designated members of the health care team may perform or deliver. Standing orders must be in written form and signed and dated by the provider.

For VDH, Standing Orders for COVID-19 vaccinations are provided by the *“Revised Order Authorizing Dispensing and Administering of the COVID19 Vaccine under Virginia Code 54.1-3408(P)”* (Revised 10/19/22, [VDH COVID Vaccine Standing Order](#)). It explicitly identifies groups of health professionals who can

authorize the administration of the COVID-19 vaccines. This order supplements the existing authorization under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act (which also allows groups of health professionals to administer the COVID-19 vaccines). Combined, they create the opportunity for more health professionals to be COVID-19 vaccinators for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

What is the “PREP Act”?

The PREP Act was enacted in 2005 by Congress. The Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act authorizes the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HSS Secretary) to issue a PREP Act *declaration* in response to a public health emergency. The declaration provides immunity from tort liability (except for willful misconduct) for claims of loss caused by, arising out of, relating to, or resulting from the administration or use of covered countermeasures to diseases (i.e., COVID-19 vaccines), threats and conditions identified in the declaration to those authorized by PREP. PREP Act declarations have been issued many times in the past, including for the H1N1 pandemic in 2009.

What is a “declaration”?

A declaration includes the determination of a threat or credible risk, recommendation for action, and the category of diseases, health conditions or health threats. It also includes the effective period of time, the covered population, the geographic area of administration, and any limitations.

What is a “covered countermeasure”?

A covered countermeasure may include vaccines, antidotes, medications, medical devices, or other FDA regulated assets used to

respond to pandemics, epidemics, or any biological, chemical, radiological, or nuclear threat.

What is “immunity from tort liability”?

Immunity from tort liability means there is no legal tort claim that can be pursued in state or federal courts. Tort claims include all claims (except for willful misconduct), under federal or state law for any type of loss including death; physical, mental, or emotional injury; fear of such injury; or property damage or loss, including business interruption loss, with any causal relationship to any stage of development, distribution, administration, dispensing, or use of the covered countermeasure recommended in the PREP Act declaration.

Who is covered under the PREP Act in Virginia?

Licensed health professionals (Current and previously active within the last 5 years) or other individuals authorized by the Commonwealth of Virginia to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

Who are the explicitly identified groups of health professionals who can authorize the administration of the COVID-19 vaccines under the COVID Vaccine Standing Order under Virginia Code [54.1-3408\(P\)](#)?

- Pharmacists actively licensed in Virginia who are in good standing to practice in Virginia per the Virginia Board of Pharmacy to dispense and administer FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines
- Pharmacy technicians and pharmacy interns who have satisfied the

requirements of the PREP Act acting under the supervision of a pharmacist, who have enrolled in the CDC COVID-19 vaccination program to administer FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines

- Registered nurses (RNs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs) actively licensed in Virginia who are in good standing to practice in Virginia per the Virginia Board of Nursing to administer FDA authorized COVID-19 vaccines at community vaccination events. (LPNs must be under the supervision of an RN.)

Can those who were previously authorized under HB2333 continue to administer COVID-19 vaccines? What changed when HB233 ended?

Virginia’s Executive Order Number 51 (Declaration of Public Health Emergency) expired on June 30, 2021. Beginning July 1, 2021, Virginia was no longer under a public health emergency. Also, because EO51 ended, HB 2333 (allowing temporary authorizations to a wide array of healthcare personnel to vaccinate Virginians with COVID-19 vaccines) also ended. Those who previously qualified to administer COVID-19 vaccines now must qualify under the PREP Act. Only those healthcare providers listed under the PREP Act are now eligible. (Examples of a few positions no longer authorized: Athletic Trainers, Dental Hygienists, Radiation Technologists, healthcare providers with expired licenses over 5 years.)

Additionally, the expiration of HB2333 also resumes oversight for some positions still authorized to administer COVID-19 vaccines. (i.e., LPNs and students in other healthcare professions)

Eligible Vaccinators:

In the Commonwealth of Virginia, who is eligible to administer COVID-19 vaccines under the PREP Act?

Health Professionals (Current and Previously Active within the last 5 years)

Dentists

Emergency medical technicians (advanced or intermediate EMTs)

Midwives

Nurses

Advanced practice registered nurses (APRN)

Registered nurses (RN)

Licensed practical nurses (LPN); under the supervision of an RN

Optometrists

Paramedics

Pharmacists, pharmacy interns, and pharmacy technicians

Physicians

Physician assistants

Podiatrists

Respiratory therapists

Veterinarians

Healthcare Students

Dental

Emergency medical technicians (advanced or intermediate EMTs)

Medical

Midwifery

Nursing

Optometry

Paramedic

Pharmacy and pharmacy intern

Physician assistant

Podiatry

Respiratory therapy

Veterinary

Please note:

- Licensure does not have to be in Virginia.
- All non-traditional vaccinators **must** complete an observation period with a provider that routinely gives vaccines.
- All eligible healthcare students must comply with all applicable requirements for oversight as they normally would during their clinical rotations. Additionally, all educational healthcare training programs must have an up-to-date clinical MOA with VDH to participate.

Who is authorized to vaccinate when a prescriber is NOT on site?

A prescriber may authorize, pursuant to a protocol approved by the Board of Nursing, the administration of vaccines to adults for immunization, when a practitioner with prescriptive authority is not physically present, by (i) licensed pharmacists, (ii) registered nurses, or (iii) licensed practical nurses under the supervision of a registered nurse. A prescriber acting on behalf of and in accordance with established protocols of the Department of Health may authorize the administration of vaccines to any person by a pharmacist, nurse, or designated emergency medical services provider who holds an advanced life support certificate issued by the Commissioner of Health under the direction of an operational medical director when the prescriber is not physically present. The emergency medical services provider shall provide documentation of the vaccines to be recorded in the Virginia Immunization Information System.

States, tribes, and territories are encouraged to further expand the categories of persons authorized to administer COVID-19 vaccines in

their states, tribal areas, or territories, as authorized under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act, to respond to the local needs and availability of potential vaccinators (for adults).

What are the training and supervision requirements for vaccinators in Virginia?

- Documentation of completion of the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Vaccine Training** ([CDC COVID19 Vaccine Training](#)) and other training as required by the SLTTs where the vaccine is being administered.
- Documentation of an observation period by a currently practicing healthcare professional experienced in administering intramuscular injections (PREP act states minimum of 1 hour of observation)
- Current certification in basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). *(Please see additional FAQs regarding CPR certification.)*
- Students must also be supervised by a currently practicing healthcare professional experienced in administering intramuscular injection.
- Pharmacists, pharmacy interns, pharmacy technicians and pharmacy students must also complete a practical training program that is approved by the ACPE as well as a minimum of two hours of ACPE-approved immunization-related continuing pharmacy education during each state licensing period.

Once testing is completed and COVID-19 vaccines become available for and recommended for children (ages 5-11),

will this expansion of vaccinators be applicable for children? Would there be any special considerations for children?

Vaccinations for children are not addressed in this PREP Act amendment, but the HHS Secretary can further amend the declaration at any time. When the vaccines are available for children, HHS will consider best practices and what modifications to the declaration may be needed.

How is the PREP Act declaration integrated with the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program?

From the PREP Act: “We are encouraging individuals who are interested in being vaccinators to join their local Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) program. Many of the volunteer management portals that states and territories have developed are linkages to their MRC. We are promoting the new PREP Act declaration amendment with our MRC community. Across the 50 states and territories, MRCs look uniquely different and are state and local assets. **It is up to the states on how to use their vaccination workforce and MRCs.”**

Can a state restrict any of the professions listed in the PREP Act declaration from serving as a vaccinator? Additionally, does HHS expect each state to affirmatively include the professions listed in their vaccination team?

The PREP Act preempts state law. Any state restriction on a profession listed in the declaration that would prevent them from serving as a vaccinator is preempted. However, a state is not required to use all the professionals listed in the declaration. By listing

these professions in the declaration, the Acting HHS Secretary is identifying the providers as covered by liability protection under the PREP act, if a State chooses to use them as vaccinators. However, the State would be responsible for which of the categories of professions it uses as vaccinators within its jurisdiction. For example, a state could opt to use dentists but not veterinarians, though both are qualified persons covered under the PREP Act.

How does the PREP Act impact state, local, territorial, and tribal health agencies (SLTTs) regarding who can vaccinate?

Ultimately, states and territories may choose which qualified persons to use for vaccinations in their jurisdiction.

Malpractice in Virginia:

Does the Governor's Executive Order 51, which expired on June 30th, 2021, also remove protections against medical malpractice claims?

For those authorized to vaccinate against COVID-19 under the PREP Act, coverage remains in place. Those who were vaccinating under HB2333 prior to July 1, 2021, future coverage ended June 30, 2021. (Any claims made after July 1, 2021, regarding COVID-19 vaccinations prior to that date, would be covered.)

Pharmacy Interns and Pharmacy Technicians

Who can supervise pharmacy interns and pharmacy technicians?

The supervision requirement of pharmacy interns and technicians is reserved solely for pharmacists.

What vaccines may pharmacy interns and pharmacy technicians administer?

Pharmacy interns and pharmacy technicians may administer childhood vaccines to children ages 3-18 and COVID-19 vaccines to children and adults while under the supervision of a pharmacist.

EMS Providers (EMTs)

What are the current requirements for EMS providers (EMTs) to vaccinate for COVID-19 in Virginia?

In order for EMS providers to support VDH vaccination clinics, according to § 54.1-3408, they must:

- a. Hold a valid, unrestricted Advanced Life Support certificate issued by the Virginia Commissioner of Health
- b. Be affiliated with the Virginia EMS agency developing the vaccination program
- c. Be individually approved by their agency Operational Medical Director (OMD) as a vaccinator
- d. Follow protocols approved by their OMD for vaccine administration

Can EMS providers work as MRC volunteers at MRC vaccination events?

MRC volunteers that are EMS providers can ONLY provide vaccinations under direction of their EMS Agency and OMD.

What levels of EMT are eligible to vaccinate in Virginia?

All 3 ALS certification levels are permitted to administer vaccines (EMT Advanced, EMT Intermediate, and EMT Paramedic) in Virginia.

However, as described in [COV 32.1-46.02](#), the administration of influenza vaccine to minors remains limited to EMT Intermediate and EMT Paramedics only. Advanced EMT's are not permitted to give flu vaccines to minor children. Please go to [Vaccine Policy for Administration by EMS in VA](#) for additional guidance.

For EMS providers, does the OMD have to be the vaccine prescriber, or can that be LH Director?

There would need to be an MOA with VDH to spell out how the partnership would work.

Nursing Students

What can nursing students do at vaccination clinics?

Per [18VAC90-27-110](#), "In accordance with [§54.1-3001](#) of the Code of Virginia, a nursing student, while enrolled in an approved nursing program, may perform tasks that would constitute the practice of nursing."

Can any nursing student vaccinate?

Schools of Nursing must have a current School MOA with VDH, and students must be supervised by their clinical instructor or preceptor (RNs may precept up to 2 nursing students.), and in accordance with all Board of Nursing regulations.

Note: Under the PREP Act they should have completed the CDC COVID-19 vaccine training

modules. Current CPR certification is also required.

What are the Board of Nursing required qualifications of providers for adult immunization?

[18VAC90-21-50](#) Pursuant to provisions of subsection I of [§ 54.1-3408](#) of the Code of Virginia, a protocol shall be submitted to and approved by the board prior to the administration of an adult immunization program that includes the following:

1. Purpose and objectives of immunization program.
2. Target population.
3. Name and address of medical director.
4. A signed and dated medical directive.
5. Screening criteria for inclusion and exclusion.
6. Informed consent form.
7. Immunization procedures.
 - a. Dosage.
 - b. Single or multiple dose administration.
 - c. Injection site.
 - d. Vaccine storage.
 - e. Biohazardous waste disposal.
 - f. Standard precautions.
8. Post-immunization instructions.
9. Emergency guidelines, including a signed medical directive for emergency treatment.
10. Qualification of immunization providers.
 - a. Virginia licensure as a registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, or pharmacist.
 - b. Supervision of a licensed practical nurse provider.
 - c. Current cardiopulmonary resuscitation training.
11. Resource personnel and supervision.

12. Sample of patient record with date, vaccine, dose, site, expiration date, lot number, and administering person's signature.

Students of Other Healthcare Professions

Can students of other healthcare professions provide COVID-19 vaccinations in Virginia?

- Students of medicine, nursing, dental medicine, midwifery, optometry, paramedic, pharmacy, physician assistant studies, podiatry, respiratory therapy, veterinary 6 medicine, and emergency medical technician students (advanced or intermediate EMTs) who are in good academic standing may vaccinate through VDH, LHD, or hospital community clinics IF their school certifies that students have been properly trained in vaccination administration. This includes completion of the required PREP act training modules.
- Schools must have a current school MOA with VDH, and students must be supervised by their clinical instructor or preceptor.
- Current CPR certification is required by the PREP act.

Medical Assistants

Are Medical Assistants eligible vaccinators?

VDH does not utilize Medical Assistants in their vaccination events.

CPR REQUIREMENTS:

Does every vaccinator need to be CPR certified?

Yes.

Why must all personnel administering the COVID-19 vaccine be skilled and qualified to perform Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)?

In case of an adverse event, HHS wants to ensure that staff who are CPR trained are available. Because of the variety of venues, from mass vaccination clinics to small operations, vaccinators need to have the requisite skills to deal with any adverse events immediately. The intent is to avoid any possible delay in care due to a centralized, but physically distant CPR trained individual or group, time required to call for assistance, or in the unlikely event of simultaneous medical emergencies or adverse events.

Are new vaccinators required to have CPR certification?

CPR certification applies to all vaccinators. This includes new and current vaccinators. For additional questions or concerns, please contact your nurse manager.

Are physicians required to have CPR certification to be vaccinators?

No, physicians are typically the ordering provider and do not need to be CPR certified. They generally already have ACLS certification.

Does Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) satisfy the requirement of a CPR Basic Life Support (BLS) certification?

ACLS certification does meet the requirement for CPR BLS certification. However, both certifications are acceptable.

What type of CPR training satisfies the PREP Act requirements?

There are many types of Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) courses (CPR, CPR + basic first aid, CPR + AED, etc.). The CPR certification requirement is satisfied by, among other things, a certification in basic CPR by an online program that has received accreditation from the American Heart Association or the American Red Cross. (For additional questions or concerns, please contact your nurse manager.)

The PREP Act declaration only requires basic CPR and not the other associated trainings. It also does not specify in-person or virtual, so this determination is at the discretion of the professional and the organization or agency the individual will be working under in their vaccinator role. Since there is no uniform CPR training required of all states, the decision is left up to the jurisdiction where the individual will be performing their duties. If the individual meets the requirement within the PREP Act and that of the requirement of the state where they are performing the vaccinator duties, they are covered.

Which CPR certification is allowed for VDH nursing staff?

The Vaccinator Training Plan states that any equivalent training offered "such as" the one provided by AHA is acceptable. For additional questions or concerns, please contact your nurse manager.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[VDH: Training and Preparation For Administering COVID-19 Vaccination – Emergency Preparedness \(virginia.gov\)](#)

[COVID-Vaccine-Standing-Order.pdf \(virginia.gov\)](#)

[PREP Act](#)