



Visit our COVID-19 Page  
Here

**Dear Member:**

### **Accurately Estimating Vaccine Quantity**

AHCA/NCAL reports receiving feedback from the federal CDC that facilities nationwide appear to be overestimating the number of people expected to be vaccinated during the LTC Pharmacy Partnership clinics. This is being attributed to a variety of things, including last minute decisions to stagger staff, poor estimates, or staff backing out at the last minute. This results in the pharmacies thawing too many vaccines, which must be used within 6 hours, and states scrambling to reallocate to other priority groups before they expire. AHCA is also hearing of this happening in other settings too, such as hospitals.

If you are participating in the pharmacy partnership program, your matched pharmacy (CVS/Walgreens/LTC pharmacy) will call you a few days before the clinic to confirm the number of people to be vaccinated.

While we have not heard this concern specific to Maine, we take this opportunity to remind you that it is very important to accurately estimate the number of people to be vaccinated at this time to avoid any wastage. If there are any changes to that estimate, communicate this to your matched pharmacy partner as soon as possible. We recommend the following:

- Timely surveys (within 2-3 days of the clinic) of staff and residents to determine how many plan to take the vaccine.
- Frequent and regular communication on vaccine benefits and safety up until the clinic date.
- For ideas, resources and collateral, visit [#GetVaccinated \(ahcancal.org\)](https://www.ahcancal.org/#GetVaccinated)

### **TOMORROW: COVID-19 Vaccine Safety: A Fireside Chat with AHCA/NCAL, CMS, and CDC**

**Wednesday, December 30, 4:00 PM Eastern**

Join the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) for a fireside chat on vaccine safety, Wednesday, December 30 at 4:00 PM Eastern.

This discussion kicks-off a special series, as a part of the CMS National Nursing Home Stakeholder call series, aimed at addressing staff questions and concerns about the new COVID-19 vaccines. Each session will be moderated by CMS with speakers from CDC and representatives of frontline staff and providers.

The initial call will address myths surrounding vaccine danger with the following panelists:

- Dr. Lee Fleisher, Chief Medical Officer and Director, Center for Clinical Standards and Quality (CMS)
- Dr. Amanda Cohn, Chief Medical Officer (Acting), Office of Vaccine Policy, Preparedness, and Global Health, Office of the Director (CDC)
- Dr. David Gifford, Chief Medical Officer and Director, Center for Health Policy Evaluation in LTC (AHCA/NCAL)

Register in advance for this webinar: [Webinar Registration - Zoom \(zoomgov.com\)](https://www.zoomgov.com/join/9171111111)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Would you like to submit questions for the panel to discuss? Questions can be sent to [COVID-19@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:COVID-19@cms.hhs.gov). Note that there will not be a Q&A session during the call but questions may be submitted ahead of time.

The target audience for this webinar includes **nursing home frontline staff, and Chief Nursing Officers.**

## Summary of Today's CDC Medical Director/Clinician Call

- Maine CDC reports 590 new cases today and increasing outbreaks in long term care.
- Maine CDC reminds providers of its recent update regarding the use of BinaxNOW Antigen Test cards. Maine DHHS no longer recommends a PCR test to confirm a positive BinaxNOW Antigen test in a symptomatic individual. In addition, Maine DHHS no longer recommends a PCR test to confirm a positive BinaxNOW Antigen test when used for serial testing of asymptomatic critical infrastructure. Under this scenario, critical infrastructure who are identified as a close contact of a confirmed case are serially tested to allow them to continue to work as long as they remain negative on the test. Critical infrastructure workers are limited to the following categories: Healthcare Workers, Education and First Responders.
- Maine CDC updates positivity rates regularly and usually posts on Thursdays, the rates can be found at the following <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/data.shtml>

Scroll down to "View Tables of Data for the Previous 14 and 28 Days"

- Bill Montejo of DLC noted that guidance to address federal and state positivity rate testing intervals will be coming soon. Clarification was sought on this issue now that some Maine counties have hit a positivity rate that would trigger weekly testing at the federal level but not at the State level.
- Vaccination in long term care is under way. The State is in part 1A of its plan. 19,000 vaccines have been given overall in Maine thus far. Resident vaccination rates are quite high in several facilities who reported today a greater than 90% uptake. The likelihood of side effects is higher after the second dosage of vaccine. Providers should be prepared for that possibility.
- Providers should review the federal CDC post vaccine considerations for staff and residents:
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/post-vaccine-considerations-healthcare-personnel.html>
  - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/post-vaccine-considerations-residents.html>
- Maine CDC issued the health advisory, [Adverse Event Related to Vaccination with Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine](#), on December 24, 2020.
- Maine CDC reports many questions from providers about when to expect changes in federal and state guidance now that vaccination is under way. Bottom line as of today - nothing is going to change in the immediate future regarding visitation, guidelines, testing, etc. despite vaccination efforts.
- The State is offering a series of short (30min) "COVID-19 Vaccine Info Sessions" **twice/week** for the next several months at the following times: **Tuesdays at 7:30 - 8AM** and **Fridays at 12 noon – 12:30PM** The sessions will offer brief didactic sessions on the vaccine development & approval process, followed by time for questions & discussions. Clinicians are welcome to attend one or multiple sessions. The content of the calls will be basically the same both days of the week, however, the Q&A will change, which will drive further unique discussion each day. The sessions will be held via Zoom using the following log-in and/or call-in info for all sessions:
  - Zoom/web: <https://zoom.us/j/6218434986>
  - Meeting ID: 621 843 4986
  - Passcode: 338847
- Mark your calendars now for next week's **CDC COVID-19 Preparedness Call with Dr. Shah** on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 2:30 pm. ZOOM information coming soon. This will REPLACE the usual Medical Directors/Clinician call next week only.

Thank you for all you do to care for your residents and staff.

Nadine L. Grosso  
Vice President and Director of Communications  
[ngrosso@mehca.org](mailto:ngrosso@mehca.org)