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Dear Member:

COVID-19 VACCINATION NEWS

Facilities Have Two Weeks to Register Vaccination Preferences in National Distribution Program for LTC Residents

On Friday, October 16, the White House announced the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program—a national vaccine distribution program for long term care residents. The COVID-19 vaccine will likely become available in phases over the coming months. To prepare, the federal government has partnered with CVS and Walgreens to distribute and administer the vaccine to residents in long term care facilities. This program is free of charge and covers all of the reporting requirements associated with the vaccine. Vaccination for health care workers will be handled by states, and likely take place in early phases of distribution.

Starting on Monday, October 19, long term care facilities (nursing homes, assisted living communities, ICF/IIDs and other congregate settings for older adults) will have two weeks to register with the CDC on how they want to receive and administer the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available. Nursing homes will be able to register through the NHSN website, while assisted living communities and other congregate settings can register through an online survey.

- Nursing Homes should register through NHSN: <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/index.html>
- Assisted Living Facilities and other congregate settings (ICF/IIDs, independent living, etc.) should register through RedCap at <https://airc.cdc.gov/surveys/?s=R3TYTJDAW4>

We strongly encourage all long term care facilities to participate and register as soon as the portals open and before the deadline. This is critical to ensuring our vulnerable residents are among the first to receive a vaccine when it becomes available.

When registering, providers have the option of selecting one of four options to receive the vaccine and have it administered to their residents. This will also apply to any staff members who do not get vaccinated through the state. The four options are:

1. Have CVS (partnering with Omnicare) come to your building and administer the vaccine.
2. Have Walgreens (partnering with PharMerica) come to your building and administer the vaccine.
3. Work with your existing pharmacy partner (LTC pharmacy), if they have the capability to meet the requirements
4. Partner with another entity such as your hospital health care system, local/state health department, etc.

Important: Before selecting options 3 or 4, the provider should confirm that this entity can meet all the CDC requirements (including cold chain management) and has signed a provider agreement with your state). The CDC is offering an [overview](#) and [FAQs](#) to help further explain the program.

AHCA Hosting Office Hours on the New Pharmacy Partnership

This is a reminder to attend the webinar, [Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program for COVID-19 Vaccination Office Hours](#) Wednesday, October 21st at 3 PM ET.

All registrants will be sent the direct link to the webinar 30 mins before the start of the event. You will not need to log back into ahcancaLED however you do have the option to doing so. To access the

webinar in ahcancelIED do the following:

1. Direct your browser to this [link](#) and login using your username and password.
2. Once the page opens, click on the "Live Webinar" button on the right hand side of the page. The presentation will open in a new window for you to view and hear the program.
[Please click here if you have forgotten your password.](#)

Need further assistance or technical support? Email educate@ahca.org

Maine Submits Initial COVID-19 Vaccination Plan to Federal Government

Last week, Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) submitted to the federal government its [plan](#) for distributing an eventual COVID-19 vaccine, representing the first version of a plan that will be updated and refined in collaboration with health care partners and communities throughout the state.

Maine's first version offers a framework for an accessible, flexible, and equitable distribution plan, with additional changes expected given the open questions about any vaccines that are eventually approved by the federal government. Stakeholder input will also shape the final plan and its implementation.

Anticipating that supply of vaccine will be limited initially, Maine intends to use as a guide the [vaccine priority groups](#) identified by the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Science, with future adjustments expected. The Academies developed the framework at the request of the U.S. CDC and National Institutes of Health to assist policymakers in the U.S. and globally in planning for equitable allocation of COVID-19 vaccine.

Phase 1 would include health care workers providing direct patient care in high risk settings, others who work in critical infrastructure, and those working and living in congregate settings. Phase 2 would begin when supply is sufficient to vaccinate more broadly and include people with underlying health conditions, along with school staff and people in correctional settings. Phase 3 would transition to more routine vaccination efforts in both populated and rural areas across Maine, with Phase 4 expanding vaccine access to all residents.

"Understanding the impact that COVID-19 can have on long term care facilities, we are pleased to know that nursing homes and assisted living facilities will be an important part of Maine's plan when a vaccine becomes available," **said Rick Erb, president of the Maine Health Care Association.** "Maine Health Care Association has appreciated the opportunity to discuss these next steps and looks forward to continued collaboration on the plan with State officials."

MHCA and MHA Op/Ed: Hospitals and Nursing Homes Need Aid from the State

A guest column jointly written by Maine Hospital Association and MHCA appeared in yesterday's Portland Press Herald. Citing their members' role in fighting the pandemic that has come at a great financial cost, the CEOs of both associations outline the need for State funding. They note the price providers have paid, both human and financial during COVID-19. Read more:

[maine-voices-hospitals-and-nursing-homes-need-aid-from-the-state](#)

Notes from Maine CDC Medical Directors/Clinician Call - 10-20-20

Case Updates:

CDC reported that Maine is seeing general spread/activity in Waldo and Knox Counties, which has led to testing in two local long term care facilities; the state is working on increasing testing in those areas. Several long term care facilities in other parts of the state have picked up 1 or 2 cases during routine testing.

Visitation:

OADS and DLC staff reviewed recently released NF and AH guidance, as well as the community engagement table:

- [Table-Guidance-for-LTC-ICFID-Activities.pdf](#)
- [Testing-CommEngagement-AssistedHousing-Guidance.pdf](#)
- [NursingFacility-Visitation-CMS-Memo.pdf](#)
- [LTC-Visitation-Guidance.pdf](#)

DLC is getting many questions about residents going home for Thanksgiving/Christmas. In line with the Maine CDC position on this, it is not advisable at this time.

KEY POINT: Facilities CANNOT require testing, or proof thereof, a condition of family visitation, per CMS! If you do, you will be cited, per Licensing. If families/visitors voluntarily choose to be tested and disclose the results, that's acceptable.

Reminder that the State is using different metric than the federal government. MHCA will be routinely monitoring the new Maine CDC community COVID rate measure and will be uploading the link and copy of the data to our MHCA COVID Resource webpage as this is updated. Currently data

is generated every 14 days and we anticipate an updated measure by the end of this week. Keep in mind that facilities are responsible for tracking this information and adjusting your testing and visitation practices as warranted.

Testing:

Multi-level facilities may or may not be able to get on same schedule of testing (ie NF and AL) if using HETL. Please contact DHHS director for testing: sally.weiss@maine.gov if you have questions or concerns about scheduling.

Self-Swabbing resource materials for your testing plans are available on Maine OADS Webpage and include:

- [Annotated Index and Overview Information Long Term Care Staff Self-Test Materials \(Word\)](#)
- [Consent for Release of Protected Health Information \(PHI\) \(Word\)](#)
- [Guidance for Staff Self-Testing in Long Term Care Facilities \(Word\)](#)
- [Lab Web Portal \(LWP\) Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#)
- [Health Environment Testing Laboratory SARS-CoV-2 Specimen Submission Form \(Word\)](#)
- [Preparation and Set-Up \(Word\)](#)

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

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