

**Long-term care Access to COVID-19 Vaccines**  
**Maintenance Phase: Ensuring Access**  
March 24, 2021

Iowa's long-term care (LTC) facilities have made great strides in vaccinating their residents and staff against COVID-19 and are nearing completion of the initial three-visit vaccination cycle through the Federal LTC Pharmacy Partnership Program. As facilities reach the end of this initial phase, individual residents and staff are likely to need access to COVID-19 vaccination(s), whether they were unable to receive a vaccine during the first phase or they have become newly eligible as new staff members or residents of a LTC facility. These individuals should consider vaccine administration within 3-4 weeks of their arrival in LTC. **Vaccination of residents and staff within LTC facilities is essential in reducing the risk of COVID-19 illness and outbreaks.**

Although Iowa's vaccination strategy relies on hundreds of vaccinators around the state (clinics, pharmacies, local public health), and the supply of vaccine allocated to Iowa continues to be less than the demand for vaccination, the pathways for LTC to access vaccine will vary due to local capacity and pre-existing relationships. Therefore, the best approach for one facility may not be the best approach for another.

This document is intended to assist leaders of LTC facilities by describing pathways to support the ongoing need for vaccinating LTC residents and staff.

**Ongoing vaccination planning resources**

The following are a list of vaccination options for LTC residents and staff to consider for their planning purposes. Please explore all options based on your facility's planning needs, recognizing that the ultimate long-term goal will be to align with your facility's vaccination plan.

**1. Iowa Vaccine Finder – Most ideal for LTC staff**

Website: <https://vaccinate.iowa.gov/>

The Vaccine Connector is a tool for Iowans, who have not yet been vaccinated and are either eligible now or later, to be notified when their turn for a vaccine is made available. The sites listed on this website will allow LTC staff to either schedule an appointment or get on a wait list with a local vaccine provider.

**2. Connect with your typical vaccine provider – Most ideal for LTC residents**

- Connect with your vaccine provider to explore their availability and/or process for scheduling vaccination clinics. This is most ideal for LTC facilities who have an existing relationship regarding vaccination administration (e.g. influenza), and who have at least 5 residents or staff needing vaccination.
- Contact your contracted pharmacy to verify if they have access to vaccine. This pharmacy may already have access to vaccine through state/LPH allocated doses or through participation in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Partnership (e.g., CPESN Iowa sites, Hy-Vee, etc...). To understand the current Federal Retail Pharmacy Partners in Iowa, you may visit these websites below. Please note that not all CPESN Iowa or Hy-Vee pharmacies have received vaccines due to the limited supply.

- CPESN Iowa: <https://www.cpesniowa.com/pharmacy-finder>
- Hy-Vee: <https://www.hy-vee.com/my-pharmacy/covid-vaccine>
- If your contracted pharmacy does not have vaccine available, they may have business arrangements with another LTC or community-based pharmacy which does have vaccine availability.
- If your contracted pharmacy needs guidance on enrolling in the state process to receive vaccine (e.g., allocated from local public health), they can contact the Iowa Pharmacy Association for technical assistance at [IPA@iarx.org](mailto:IPA@iarx.org).

### **3. Connect directly with additional federal LTC pharmacy partners**

- The following list of long-term care (LTC) pharmacies have enrolled with the federal government to provide COVID-19 vaccine ongoing. These pharmacies have agreed to provide services to LTC even if they currently do not provide pharmacy services to the LTC. These pharmacies will only provide services to those LTC/ALFs that were enrolled in the LTC-Pharmacy Program. Vaccine availability at these pharmacies will be limited until the national vaccine supply increase in April and May.
- To view the list of long-term care (LTC) pharmacies enrolled with the federal government to provide COVID-19 vaccine can be found in a PDF format at the following CDC website (look for the section titled “Maintenance Phase: Ensuring Access”):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/long-term-care/pharmacy-partnerships.html>

### **4. Connect directly with local public health (LPH)**

- Collaborate with LPH on upcoming vaccination clinics available to your residents and/or staff.
- Connect with LPH if barriers exist in accessing vaccination assistance.
- You can find contact information for your LPH here: <https://idph.iowa.gov/lphs/local-public-health-agencies>.

### **5. Connect directly with primary care provider or health-system clinic – Option for staff and residents**

- Direct LTC staff to work directly with their primary care provider to schedule vaccination appointments.
- Assist/guide LTC residents to set up vaccination appointments with their primary care provider.
- Connect with your vaccine provider to explore their availability and/or process for scheduling vaccination clinics. This is most ideal for LTC facilities who have an existing relationship regarding vaccination administration (e.g. influenza), and who have at least 5 residents or staff needing vaccination.

## **Issues to consider for LTC facility leaders**

The following is a baseline set of questions to consider when developing your short- and long-term vaccination plan for new staff and residents. It’s important to recognize that COVID-19 vaccinations may not exactly align with your normal vaccination processes (e.g. influenza) in the short-term, however, the goal is to eventually align with them.

Addressing staff vaccination planning:

- What standard guidance will be given (e.g. where to go, how to access information, etc.) to new staff around completion of vaccination administration?
- What plans are in place for staff declinations?

Addressing resident vaccination planning:

- What standard practice will be in place for new residents to receive vaccination administration?
- What limiting factors must be taken into consideration when selecting standard practice?
- Who will be responsible to arrange vaccination efforts for residents?
- What plans are in place for staff declinations?

Administration planning points:

- Who will be responsible to update vaccination planning efforts when state resources change?
- How will information be communicated to staff and residents?
- What communication is being shared with families?
- What other facilities could you collaborate and coordinate on-site vaccine provision?

Other key points to consider:

- With varying amounts of doses per vaccine vial and unique storage and handling conditions of each vaccine, many vaccine providers will look to coordinate end-of-day vaccination efforts to ensure no dose is wasted in a community.
- Reporting requirements to the state and CDC are extremely important to the vaccine provider. Be sure whomever is providing the vaccine has all necessary documentation.
- With increasing availability of the single-dose COVID-19 vaccine, this may be a preferred option to reduce administrative burden. Be sure to verify with your vaccine provider, which vaccine will be provided.

## **Stay informed**

As the COVID-19 pandemic response continues to evolve and vaccine capacity increases, it is vital for LTC facilities to stay strongly connected to their community vaccination resources. This can be achieved by staying in close communication with local partners such as local public health, health care coalitions, health care providers, etc.

Leverage your local public health, pharmacy, and health care coalitions as a resource. Although they may not be able to serve as vaccinators, they are vital in sharing information regarding community efforts.

Lastly, ongoing discussions continue at the federal level regarding additional vaccinator programs/options. State and regional leaders will continue to share as much information as possible when it is made available.

## **Vaccination Education**

### **COVID-19, vaccination, & pregnancy:**

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG):

- *Coronavirus (COVID-19), Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding: A Message for Patients* [<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding>]
- *Vaccinating Pregnant and Lactating Patients Against COVID-19: Information for Clinicians* [<https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/articles/2020/12/vaccinating-pregnant-and-lactating-patients-against-covid-19>]
- *Vaccinating Pregnant Individuals: Eight Key Recommendations for COVID-19 Vaccination Sites* [<https://www.acog.org/-/media/project/acog/acogorg/files/pdfs/clinical-guidance/practice-advisory/covid-19-vaccination-site-recommendations.pdf>]

University of Massachusetts Medical School:

- *I'm pregnant. Should I get a COVID\* vaccine?* [<https://www.baystatehealth.org/-/media/files/covid19/vaccine-info-for-pregnant-people-updated-12-28.pdf?la=en>]

Harvard Medical School:

- *Wondering about COVID-19 vaccines if you're pregnant or breastfeeding?* [<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/wondering-about-covid-19-vaccines-if-youre-pregnant-or-breastfeeding-2021010721722> ]

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- *Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines* [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>]
- *Characteristics and Maternal and Birth Outcomes of Hospitalized Pregnant Women with Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 — COVID-NET, 13 States, March 1–August 22, 2020* [[https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6938e1.htm#F2\\_down](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6938e1.htm#F2_down)]

## **Additional Resources**

Iowa Health Care Association: <https://iowahealthcare.org/>

Iowa Pharmacy Association: <https://www.iarx.org/>

LeadingAge Iowa: <https://www.leadingageiowa.org/>

Vaccinate Iowa: <https://vaccinate.iowa.gov/>