



Federal Retail Pharmacy Program Updates

Video update from Scott Podolan

In this latest video, Scott provides an update on the Federal Retail Pharmacy Partnership Program, adds additional detail, and answers some FAQs around the difference between a “third dose” of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines now approved for moderate to severely immunocompromised patients, and “boosters” for patients whose immunity may have waned over time. He also discusses ways to reach vaccine-hesitant patients in your community, new marketing materials available, payor updates, and more.

[Watch now](#)

FDA Approves first COVID-19 vaccine Approval Signifies Key Achievement for Public Health

U.S. Food and Drug Administration, August 23, 2021

Recently, an editor from Pharmacy Times sat down with Kevin Day, PharmD, president of Day’s Miami Heights Pharmacy in Cincinnati, Ohio, to discuss how his independent pharmacy is gearing up for influenza season while continuing to deliver COVID-19 vaccines safely.

Pharmacy Times: How have pharmacy staff helped to streamline the immunization programs at your pharmacy?

Day: In our pharmacy we have a clerk who works at the front register, right inside the door when someone walks in. That person is responsible for starting the process and identifying that a customer is there for a vaccine, whether they have an appointment or just walk in. There is a notification process for us in the pharmacy to know there’s a vaccine appointment or a vaccine walk-in ready for us. Then we generally use either a technician or a pharmacy intern to check in the person and complete any required paperwork or documentation, which varies by vaccine. With COVID-19 vaccines, the process is online; with most of the other vaccines, it’s still a paper process.

[Read more](#)

CDC Talking Points/FAQs on COVID-19 vaccine boosters

Q: When can I get a COVID-19 vaccine booster?

A: Not immediately. The goal is for people to start receiving a COVID-19 booster shot beginning in the fall, with individuals being eligible starting 8 months after they have received their second dose of mRNA vaccine (either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna). This is subject to FDA approval and CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) authorization and recommendation.

Q: Who will be the first people to get a booster dose?

A: Once FDA approves and ACIP recommends a booster dose, the goal is for the first people eligible to be those who were the first to receive their shots in the earlier phases of the vaccine rollout and those who are most at risk. This includes healthcare providers, nursing home residents, and other seniors.

Q: Why are we waiting to start offering COVID-19 vaccine boosters?

A: The COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States continue to be remarkably effective in reducing risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. However, COVID-19 constantly evolves. We're looking at all available data to understand as much as we can about how well the vaccines are working, including how new variants, like Delta, affect vaccine effectiveness. Once FDA approves and ACIP recommends, the goal is for people to start receiving a COVID-19 booster shot this fall.

Q: Will people who received Johnson & Johnson's (J&J/Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine need a booster shot?

A: It is likely that people who received a J&J COVID-19 vaccine will need a booster dose. Because the J&J vaccine wasn't given in the United States until 70 days after the first mRNA vaccine doses (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna), the data needed to make this decision isn't available yet. We expect more data to come in the next few weeks. With those data in hand, we will keep the public informed with a timely plan for J&J booster shots as well.

Q: Can people who received Johnson & Johnson's (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine get a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine?

A: There's not enough data currently to support getting an mRNA vaccine booster dose (either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna) if someone has gotten a J&J vaccine. People who took the J&J vaccine will likely need a booster dose, and more data is expected in the next few weeks. With those data in hand, we will keep the public informed with a timely plan for J&J booster shots as well.

Q: If we need a booster, does that mean that the vaccine is not working?

A: No. The COVID-19 vaccines are working very well to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death, even against the widely circulating Delta variant. However, with the Delta variant, we are starting to see reduced protection against mild and moderate disease. For that reason, we are planning for a booster shot to maximize vaccine-induced protection and prolong its durability.

Q: What's the difference between a booster shot and an additional dose?

A: An "additional dose" refers to people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised receiving an additional dose of an mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna). This is because they may not have received adequate protection from their initial 2-dose vaccine series. A "booster dose" is a supplemental vaccine dose given to people when the immune response to a primary vaccine series was adequate but is likely to have decreased over time.

Visit [Brand Central Station](#) and [SOci](#) for new digital and print marketing materials you can use to let your patients know they can count on you for the booster shot. Materials include social media graphics, window clings, counter cards, and more. Stay tuned for additional booster shot marketing materials in the coming weeks.

CDC guidance on co-administration of COVID-19 and Influenza vaccines

You may administer COVID-19 and influenza vaccines without regard to timing (both live, attenuated and non-live influenza vaccines). This includes administration of COVID-19 and influenza vaccines on the same day, as well as coadministration at any time interval. With influenza season approaching, CDC recognizes there may be compelling logistical advantages to offering patients COVID-19 and influenza vaccines on the same day, and you may encourage patients to receive these on the same day. There are no safety concerns for co-administration.

When deciding whether to co-administer another vaccine(s) with COVID-19 vaccine, consider:

- Whether the patient is behind or at risk of becoming behind on recommended vaccines
- The patient's risk of vaccine-preventable disease
- The reactogenicity profile of the vaccines
- The likelihood of avoiding a missed opportunity to vaccinate

Best practices for multiple injections include:

- Label each syringe with the name and the dosage (amount) of the vaccine, lot number, the initials of the preparer, and the exact beyond-use time, if applicable.
- Separate injection sites by 1 inch or more, if possible.
- Administer the COVID-19 vaccines and vaccines that may be more likely to cause a local reaction (i.e., adjuvanted influenza vaccines) in different limbs, if possible.

[Read more](#)

CDC Payor updates

Updated claims information from Caremark

As of 6PM Central Time on Wednesday, August 18, 2021, Plan Sponsors that utilize the standard administration fee of \$40.00 were implemented. The unique Commercial rates in the states of Colorado and Massachusetts were also implemented. Providers may now submit additional dose claims for immunocompromised individuals covered by these Plan Sponsors and must submit claims with a Submission Clarification Code (SCC) (NCPDP field # 42Ø-DK) value of "Ø7". [Read more](#).

Updated claims information from OptumRx

Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine claim submission for third dose effective: August 13, 2021 In response to the CDC and U.S. Food and Drug Administration's decision to expand emergency use authorizations for COVID-19 vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer to allow an additional dose for individuals that are immunocompromised, OptumRx has updated their systems to allow pharmacies to submit claims for the additional dose of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID vaccine after the initial two doses. To align with NCPDP recommendations, pharmacies must submit the third dose of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID vaccine claims with a Submission Clarification Code (SCC) of 07 "Medically Necessary" to identify the additional dose and receive the correct administrative fee payment. Please see below chart that outlines claim submission requirements for first, second, and third doses as applicable. [Read more](#).

Michigan COVID-19 admin fee incentive

MeridianRx will be paying an additional \$100 bonus with your COVID vaccination administration fee through 09/30/21 for Michigan Meridian Medicaid members. The following Administration Fees for the Covid-19 Vaccines will be applicable from 8/9/2021 – 10/31/2021. [Read more](#).

CMS provides update on COVID-19 Vaccines additional doses: Codes & payment

The FDA amended the emergency use authorizations (EUAs) for both the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to allow for an additional dose in certain immunocompromised people. Effective August 12, 2021, CMS will pay to administer additional doses of COVID-19 vaccines consistent with the FDA EUAs, using [CPT code 0003A](#) for the Pfizer vaccine and [CPT code 0013A](#) for the Moderna vaccine. CMS will pay the same amount to administer this additional dose as they did for other doses of the COVID-19 vaccine (approximately \$40 each). CMS will hold and then process all claims with these codes after they complete claims system updates (no later than August 27).

Help your patients overcome vaccine hesitancy with these resources

As a clinician, one of your most important roles is to counsel patients and help them make the best choices for their health. The COVID-19 pandemic -- and your fearless perseverance to continue to care for your communities -- has shined a light on your unique relationship with your patients, and the access to care that your pharmacy provides for the most socially vulnerable and underserved populations. That is why the CDC recognizes that independent pharmacists can play a vital role in combating vaccine hesitancy.

Here are some resources to help:

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a model to help clinicians understand some of the reasons for under-vaccination. The model, known as Measuring Behavioral and Social Drivers of Vaccination (BeSD), considers four specific domains that influence vaccine uptake:

- What people think and feel about vaccines (e.g., perceived benefits, perceived risks)
- Social processes that drive or inhibit vaccination (e.g., provider recommendations, social norms, rumors)
- Individual motivation or hesitancy to seek vaccination (e.g., readiness, willingness, intention, hesitancy)

- Practical issues in seeking and receiving vaccination (e.g., availability, convenience, cost)

Getting to know which of the above is influencing your patient's vaccine hesitancy can help you determine the best strategy to overcome that influence. What else can you do to encourage patients who are hesitant about the vaccine?

- Educate yourself and staff first, so you can better educate patients
- The APhA website has a wealth of resources at www.vaccineconfident.pharmacist.com
- Take advantage of the great patient-facing promotional materials on Brand Central Station in English and Spanish

Federal Retail Pharmacy Partnership Program: Other reminders

ID requirements

CDC has previously advised that providers may request ID from individuals but may not turn people away if they do not provide one. This requirement does not vary by jurisdiction because the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program is a federal program. All providers (including state immunization programs) must follow requirements in the CDC Covid-19 Vaccination Program.

Timing and ordering process

Pharmacies must request COVID-19 vaccine allocation by [following this process through ABC Order](#). Requests submitted by Mondays at 12pm EST should arrive to your pharmacy by Thursday of that same week. Any requests received after Mondays at 12pm EST will be fulfilled the following week. Order fulfillment is subject to availability.

VaccineFinder Reporting

Remember to report your vaccine inventory on hand under your FEDERAL login. You no longer need to report under state login; you can report all inventory under your Federal login. Make sure your VaccineFinder listing is accurate. Agents at vaccine.gov report instances where they have helped callers locate walk-in vaccine sites only for them to be told that the location is out of stock. Need help? Email vaccinefinder@castlighthhealth.com or call 855-886-4317.

Tell us your story!

Is your pharmacy doing anything special or innovative to vaccinate the most vulnerable patients in your community? Do you have any tips to provide your peers on how you are combatting vaccine hesitancy among your patients? If so, we want to hear about it! Your story may be featured in an upcoming issue of this newsletter, and on our Fearless Pharmacy website! Tell us your story by emailing COVIDvaccines@AmerisourceBergen.com.

Questions? Continue to work with your Business Coach or Sales Executive if you have questions. Questions can be sent to COVIDvaccines@AmerisourceBergen.com.