

Planning For COVID-19 Vaccination of Maine Youth Ages 12 to 15 May 5, 2021

With the potential for the expansion of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination authorization, the State of Maine is preparing to vaccinate youth ages 12 to 15, along with the 16- and 17-year-olds who already are eligible to be vaccinated. As with all vaccination eligibility expansions, the Maine strategy is to vaccinate people as quickly and equitably as possible. All Maine Immunization Program (MIP) providers who are able to offer the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at their locations are encouraged to support this effort to immunize youth, ages 12-17 in order to ensure widespread geographic availability.

That starts with revised guidance from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) which authorizes and encourages MIP providers to work directly with schools to vaccinate youth, including at special clinics for them and their families. This may include hosting school-based clinics, special hours at large clinics for youth, drive-through clinics so parents can give consent on the spot, and other targeted efforts to vaccinate young people against COVID-19.

The Maine Immunization Program will communicate this guidance and discuss best practices in a webinar with current providers of COVID-19 vaccine. Maine DHHS will also reach out to pediatricians, family practice doctors, school nurses and others to encourage them to educate youth and their families about the importance of COVID-19 vaccines, identify areas in the community where COVID-19 vaccines are available for youth and sign up to provide vaccines or partner with others to do so.

The Maine Department of Education (DOE) will support school administrative units (SAUs) in their own efforts to get their students vaccinated. Maine DOE will provide schools with resources and information on the Pfizer vaccine, how to find vaccine providers and how appointments are made, and distribution of education material targeted to youth and families to promote an interest in vaccination.

The initial approach to vaccinating youth is focused on speed: connecting as many youth interested in getting COVID-19 vaccines to a provider as soon as possible, through all means possible. After that, Maine plans on working on a systematic approach to ensure equity and access in all parts of the State. This will include a planning process with SAUs to ensure clinics are available in June and July so that all eligible students and school staff have the opportunity to get both doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine in time to be fully vaccinated by the start of the new school year. Details about this effort will be released after consultation with all involved in the coming weeks.

Vaccination Clinics for Workplaces, Schools, and Higher Education **Updated May 5, 2021**

Maine's COVID-19 Vaccination Strategy strives to balance efficiency with equity. It continues to support Maine Immunization Plan (MIP) providers that provide high-throughput clinics. It also continues to support providers that offer special clinics for populations that are hard to reach or marginalized. This includes individuals who have elevated risks, such as individuals with a medical condition or disability that increases the risk for severe COVID-19, or other high-risk conditions identified by U.S. CDC; and those who live in marginalized, medically-underserved, and/or remote communities, including MaineCare members and those from racial and ethnic minority groups, sexual and gender minority groups, or tribal communities.

The State of Maine supports special, closed point-of-distribution (POD) clinics for workers, especially those with increased risk of contracting or transmitting COVID-19. Such workers include but are not limited to: hospitality workers (e.g., restaurant, hotel, summer amusement park workers); agricultural, seafood, and food processing workers; grocery store workers; and workers at sites where physical distancing is challenging (e.g., shipbuilding, construction, transportation, public benefits workers). MIP providers may work with employers or industry groups directly to arrange for such clinics. At this time, MIP has limited ability to allocate additional or specific types of vaccine doses to such clinics, so providers should consider how such clinics may be accommodated with their regular supply.

Maine is also removing the limitation on special clinics for students in higher education that was described in the April 5, 2021 guidance for vaccination of youth. Typical spring semesters end in mid-to late-May. As such, students may be leaving campus and, in many cases, moving to a different part of the state or nation. MIP providers may work with higher education institutions to offer special hours, on-site clinics, or other means of high-throughput vaccination of their students and staff. MIP has limited ability to allocate special doses to such clinics at this time, so providers should consider how such clinics may be accommodated with their regular supply.

Update: Maine is also removing the limitation on special clinics for students in PK-12 schools that was described in the [April 5, 2021 guidance](#). MIP providers may work with SAUs and others in the community to offer special hours, on-site clinics, or other means of high-throughput vaccination for students and staff. MIP has limited ability to allocate special doses to such clinics at this time, so providers should consider how such clinics may be accommodated with their regular supply.

As stated in previous guidance, providers are prohibited from providing doses of COVID-19 vaccine to any individual based on special relationships with the vaccine provider. This may include, for example, members of its board of directors or friends or family of the provider or their leadership. In addition, provision of doses where there is any financial or non-financial benefit that accrues to the provider from its administration of doses at special clinics (outside of normal reimbursement for services) is prohibited.