

## State of Maine COVID-19 Vaccine Efficient Use Policy

### Update: May 28, 2021

The State of Maine has issued vaccination guidance to ensure efficiency and equity in the administration of COVID-19 vaccines. The details of the State's plan for COVID-19 vaccination distribution are posted at: <https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/>. The eligibility criteria are binding for sites receiving COVID-19 vaccine from the Maine Immunization Program (MIP).

Because the supply of COVID-19 vaccines has increased in Maine, it is important for providers not to miss an opportunity to vaccinate eligible individuals who are interested in receiving a vaccine. The State of Maine recognizes that, as we create opportunities to vaccinate more people in various locations, the likelihood of leaving unused doses in a vial may increase. Providers should make a good faith effort to use every dose possible within a vial. Providers should also follow best practices to minimize the inadvertent waste of any dose of COVID-19 vaccine, while not missing an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person when they are ready to get vaccinated.

The State of Maine and our partners are doing everything possible to minimize the amount of vaccine that goes unused. Vaccine wastage may increase as the vaccine rollout continues because:

- more providers, including smaller provider sites, are now receiving vaccine,
- vial sizes for some vaccines have increased, and
- vaccine vials may be opened without every dose being used.

#### **Best Practices to Reduce Vaccine Waste**

To ensure providers do not miss an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible individual while reducing vaccine waste, Maine CDC recommends that providers:

- Follow clinical best practice for vaccination as well as best practices when managing inventory to maximize vaccination and minimize dose wastage.
- Consider establishing and promoting standing vaccination days or half-days to increase likelihood of larger numbers of people presenting for vaccination on the same day.
- Vaccinate family members or friends who accompany patients to medical visits even if they are not established patients at the vaccinating practice
- Continue outreach to employers or other community partners that have a large membership or network to arrange vaccination events.
- As a contingency plan, contact additional persons to use as many vaccine doses as possible.

- If a provider location has a few leftover, reconstituted doses at the end of the day, consider using them to vaccinate easily accessible, eligible individuals in the community who are interested in receiving vaccine.
- If there are a substantial number of expiring vials, reach out to Maine CDC department to discuss the situation.
- Every effort should be made to coordinate the number of vials needed with the anticipated number of patients when preparing for daily clinics to help reduce over-thawing and transport (when necessary) of vaccine.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Storage**

The COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) require careful handling including cold storage and use given short expiration dates.

Vials of COVID-19 vaccine contain multiple doses. Once a vial of Pfizer vaccine is opened, doses must be used within six hours; for Moderna, doses must be used within 12 hours. For the Johnson & Johnson vaccine vial must be used within six hours after a vial is opened when stored at 2° to 8°C (36° to 46°F), or within two hours when held at room temperature (maximally 25°C/77°F). After that time, doses from that vial may not be used and must be discarded.

A useful US CDC summary of COVID-19 vaccine storage and handling requirements is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/covid19-vaccine-quick-reference-guide-2pages.pdf>.

### **Important Contact Information**

- McKesson Customer Service: 1-833-272-6634 or [SNSSupport@McKesson.com](mailto:SNSSupport@McKesson.com)
- Pfizer Customer Service: (800) 666-7248 or [cvgovernment@pfizer.com](mailto:cvgovernment@pfizer.com)
- Moderna Customer Service: 1-866-MOD-ERNA or 1-866-663-3762
- J&J/Janssen Customer Service: 1-800-565-4008 or [JSCCOVIDTEMPEXCURSION@its.jnj.com](mailto:JSCCOVIDTEMPEXCURSION@its.jnj.com)