

State of Maine COVID-19 Vaccine Efficient and Full Use Policy

Update: March 4, 2021

The State of Maine has issued guidance on vaccination distribution to ensure efficiency, equity, and prevent severe illness and death. 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).

At the same time, the State is committed to putting every dose of the COVID-19 vaccine into the arms of residents, even if that means occasional deviations from the State's plan. This guidance updates the February 16 guidance on how vaccine sites with approved Maine Immunization Provider Agreements may administer extra doses to individuals at the end of a clinic day or in extraordinary circumstances.

The COVID-19 vaccines authorized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) require careful handling including cold storage and rapid use given short expiration dates prior to opening vials. Vials of COVID-19 vaccine contain multiple doses. Once a vial of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine is opened, doses must be used within six hours; 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 period of time, doses from that vial may not be used and must be discarded.

Maine's goal is that no dose goes to waste. As such, approved sites may, without additional approval, use the small fraction of doses available at the end of a clinic to vaccinate, in this order:

- Eligible individuals who may be on a waiting list or scheduled at a future date, including "same day" waiting lists, if sites decide to create such;
- Vaccine clinic staff and volunteers, in oldest age order, who have not otherwise been vaccinated; and
- Other individuals as a last resort. Extra doses should be prioritized when possible toward individuals who have elevated risks, such as individuals with medical conditions or those living with a disability that increase the risk for severe COVID-19 such as [high-risk conditions identified by US CDC](#); 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 Department does not support sites providing extra doses to individuals based on special relationships with the vaccine provider such as members of its board of directors; friends or family of the provider's leadership; or if there is any financial or non-financial benefit that accrues to the provider from its administration of extra doses.

For two-dose vaccines, individuals who receive a first dose specific to implementation of this policy must be scheduled for the second dose, as applicable, at the same location. The second dose should not be part of the full use management policy process for that day.

Maine's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will also consider for approval exceptions to the policy or to the eligibility criteria for unbridged islands, remote locations, and other settings where the provision of vaccines to eligible individuals would be infeasible without broader eligibility. Requests for such exceptions will be rare and must be approved in advance. Requests can be submitted to: Sally.Weiss@Maine.gov.