

**Vaccination of Patients Prior to Hospital Discharge and
Vaccination of Homebound Individuals
March 30, 2021**

Vaccination of Hospitalized Patients Prior to Discharge

Many hospitals have the ability and opportunity to provide COVID-19 vaccine to patients prior to their discharge. Many hospital patients—whether inpatients or ED patients—are themselves at higher risk for COVID-19 or its complications, and providing them a vaccine prior to discharge may reduce subsequent infection, morbidity, and mortality.

Maine hospitals should vaccinate age-eligible patients using the single-dose Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine prior to discharge or release from an inpatient stay or emergency department (ED) visit. This may include, for example, patients who require some type of long-term service or support. It may also include patients being discharged from or to residential/inpatient behavioral health care.¹

Individuals discharged to their homes with conditions that require long-term services and supports (*e.g.*, home health care, personal support services) are at elevated risk of admission to a long-term care facility or readmission to a hospital. Similarly, individuals requiring inpatient and residential psychiatric or substance use disorder treatment are also at higher relative risk of consequences related to COVID-19. Thus, vaccinating them prior to discharge following an inpatient stay reduces their likelihood of experiencing morbidity and mortality associated with COVID-19. Vaccinating such individuals prior to discharge is also more logistically straightforward than vaccinating them at their destination. Hospitals should request Johnson & Johnson vaccine for this purpose via their weekly email submission to the Maine Immunization Program.

When vaccinating patients prior to discharge from an inpatient stay or ED visit, hospitals should ensure they can use all five doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine in the allotted time.² If and only if all five does cannot be used within the allotted time following vial puncture, hospitals should follow Maine's [full-use policy](#). After vaccinating inpatients or ED patients prior to discharge, this policy requires prioritizing new patient-facing hospital employees and, when possible, individuals who have elevated risks, such as individuals with medical conditions or those living with a disability, those who live in marginalized, medically-underserved, and/or remote communities, and those from racial and ethnic minority groups, sexual and gender minority groups, or tribal communities.

¹ Residents of long-term facilities have been eligible under Maine's vaccination plan since December 2020, regardless of age. They may be vaccinated prior to hospital or ED discharge in the same manner outlined in this document.

² After a vial of J&J/Janssen vaccine is first punctured, the vaccine vial may be held (1) for up to 2 hours at room temperature; OR (2) for up to 6 hours refrigerated between 2°C and 8°C. Discard any vaccine not used within the applicable time frame.

Caregivers of Homebound Individuals

The State of Maine is committed to vaccinating all eligible residents, including those who are homebound due to a disability or health condition. The Office of Aging and Disability Services, in partnership with area agencies on aging, AARP, and the Office of MaineCare Services, has developed a list of such individuals. This list is being provided to willing Maine Immunization Program home health agencies and other vaccinators. These vaccination teams are administering Johnson & Johnson / Janssen doses in these individuals' homes. To ensure full use of vaccine and in recognition that caregivers often have limited ability to leave home to travel to a vaccination clinic, vaccinators of homebound individuals in Maine may vaccinate caregivers in these homes regardless of whether such individuals are currently eligible under the Maine Vaccination Plan.