

Communication to MIP Sites with Provider Agreements that have received COVID-19 vaccines

This note contains several important updates. We will also post these periodic updates under “Provider Site Updates” on the [COVID-19 Vaccine Communication](#) page on the [COVID-19 Vaccine Providers Portal](#).

February 8, 2021 COVID-19 Vaccine Update for Sites

- I) **Maine Residency Requirement.** As stated in the [Public FAQs](#), residents of other states cannot receive a COVID-19 vaccine in Maine at this time. Maine is receiving an extremely limited supply of vaccine based on the number of Maine residents.

Maine COVID-19 Provider Vaccination sites must:

- Notify individuals at the time of registration that COVID-19 vaccine is currently available only to Maine residents. For example, have call center staff ask, “Is Maine your primary residence?”
 - A “Maine resident” is defined as an individual living in the State of Maine with the intent to remain in the state.
 - If the individual is living in Maine and has entered the State with a job commitment or seeking a job (even if only a temporary job such as migrant or seasonal workers), the individual is considered to be a Maine resident.
 - An individual who is in Maine temporarily (e.g., a visitor, tourist), does not have a job commitment, and is not seeking a job is not a resident. The individual should be advised that they should seek vaccination in their state of residency.
- Let registrants know that they will need to bring some proof of identity and documentation that shows their Maine residence when they come in for vaccination. Documentation of Maine residence could include any of the following:
 - Maine driver’s license or state identification card;
 - Bill with their name and local Maine address;
 - A letter or statement from their employer verifying their employment in Maine; or
 - Other piece of mail that shows their name with a local Maine address.
- At the time of vaccination, vaccination site staff should request that individuals show their “proof of Maine residence,” as noted above; in the interest of expediency, vaccination site staff may use discretion as to whether the proof of residence is sufficient.

- II) **Required focus on equity.** One of the core principles for vaccine distribution in the State of Maine is equity. The limited number of vaccines in the State has meant difficult decisions about how and to whom we roll-out vaccine. After completing vaccination of critical frontline health and safety personnel, Governor Mills has directed that the limited supply be used to prevent severe illness and deaths. As such, Maine is now vaccinating people ages 70 and older.

Even within each tier, many other factors contribute to health outcomes. Vaccination sites can and should examine how to more equitably distribute vaccine within each eligible group. Specifically, sites should work to eliminate barriers to access for hard-to-reach, marginalized and medically-underserved communities, including racial and ethnic minority groups, sexual and gender minority groups, tribal communities, individuals living with disability, those living on the margins of our economy, and those living in rural/geographically isolated communities. As a reminder, all vaccine sites are required to ask each person receiving vaccine for their race and ethnicity and must report the answers to the State using ImmPact, just as they report other data on who is vaccinated. In contrast, the Department will not support sites prioritizing people within an eligibility group based on factors such as being on the board of directors of the organization, having contributed to the organization, or similar elements of social privilege.

The State of Maine expects that all vaccination sites will ensure equity in the distribution process. This can be done in a number of ways, such as considering how social determinants of health may increase risk for some Mainers and establishing partnerships with local community organizations to ensure outreach and access to vaccination. The Department of Health and Human Services will be providing more specific information, expectations, and support for such plans on an ongoing basis. It will also collect information on how sites are operationalizing specific steps to ensure equitable distribution of vaccine. This information and key equity indicators will be considered in future allocation decisions.

If providers need assistance in connecting with community groups to achieve this goal, your [Public Health District Liaisons](#) can help.

- III) Phase 1b Update.** On February 4, 2021, the Department announced that Maine has vaccinated over 20 percent of people ages 70 and older. Using current supply projections for the next three weeks, we anticipate that two-thirds of people in this age group could be vaccinated by the start of March. This could enable the State to start vaccinating people ages 65 and older starting the first week of March. There are about 92,000 Mainers aged 65 to 69. As with previous phases, there will be overlap of different groups eligible to receive vaccine at the same time to ensure every dose the State receives is used to protect the health of Maine people.

Please note that this is currently a projection for planning purposes. The State has not yet authorized vaccination for people ages 65 to 69. This projected start date may be delayed if progress is not made in vaccinating hard-to-reach people ages 70 and older or if the expected vaccine supply is reduced. As such, we do not recommend pre-registration for people ages 65 to 69 at this point in time.

Significant confusion has also arisen over vaccine sites' interpretation of the phases for vaccination. Providers do not have the authority to determine who is in what phase and when different groups should be vaccinated. The State of Maine will review the U.S. CDC's recommended definitions of "high-risk medical conditions," "front-line essential workers," or "other critical frontline workers" as these phases approach. It will post those

definitions and its description of the [phases](#) on the Governor's [COVID Vaccine website](#).
Vaccination sites should not pre-register people in these groups at this time.

Please note that vaccinating people who are not currently eligible under the State plan is a violation of the Provider Agreement with the Maine Immunization Program.