



May 11, 2021

Dear Primary Care Provider:

Over 9.6 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered to Illinois residents in every corner of the state, with millions of those shots taking place at mass vaccination sites, pharmacies, in large clinics in hospitals and their ambulatory networks, and increasingly in federally qualified health centers, community outreach initiatives and mobile clinics.

With vaccine scarcity no longer a barrier to vaccination, the administration is shifting its program to “meet people where they are.” **This effort includes expanding COVID-19 vaccine administration into primary care offices (“offices”) as part of the normal workflow. Recent changes in vaccine storage requirements have made it much easier to manage and store the vaccines in the primary care setting.**

As vaccine demand is softening, we are relying on trusted messengers in familiar environments to continue the vaccination effort. You are uniquely positioned to educate patients and their families including those that may not be actively seeking the vaccine. **We are calling on you to be a part of this mobilization. One of the most compelling things a clinician can do to improve vaccine uptake is to share with patients the reason they chose to get vaccinated and offer the vaccine in the exam room.**

The information you need to get started is described below.

Becoming a COVID-19 Vaccine Provider

If you/your office is a Vaccines for Children (VFC) provider, you are already enrolled in I-CARE (the state’s immunization registry.) As such, you can begin the process of completing the COVID-19 vaccine provider agreement in I-CARE under the COVID tab.

If your office does not already have I-CARE access, you must first enroll in I-CARE. I-CARE enrollment typically takes 7-10 days after all information is received. Executing the provider agreement and issuing a COVID PIN number takes about 2 days.

<https://dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/forms/i-care-access-enrollment-packet.pdf>

Details on enrollment, obligations and requirements of COVID-19 vaccine providers may be found in the **attached SIREN, January 14, 2021**. Any questions related to I-CARE or COVID-19 vaccine provider enrollment can be addressed to: dph.immunizations@illinois.gov.

Obtaining COVID-19 Vaccine

Starting May 17, 2021, providers will be able to order vaccine directly in I-CARE and have vaccine shipped directly to their office. Minimum shipments of currently available vaccines are as follows.

- **Pfizer:** 1,170 doses in 6-dose vials (minimum shipment expected to change to 450 doses end of May)

- **Moderna:** 100 doses in 10-dose vials (minimum shipment changing to 140 doses in 14-dose vials mid- to late-May)
- **Janssen:** 100 doses in 5-dose vials

At a refrigerated temperature (2-8 degrees Celsius), a practice has up to 30 days to use Moderna (after removing from a vaccine freezer), and Janssen is normally stored at refrigeration temperature and can be used until the expiration date. **Currently, Pfizer may be stored at 2-8 degrees Celsius for up to 120 hours (5 days), but an update to the EUA is expected in May to extend that period to 30 days.**

If minimum shipment sizes are still too large for the office to use before expiration, we recommend a hub and spoke model whereby the office partners with a hub – an entity that places the order and receives the shipment. This could be a local health department (LHD), affiliated hospital or main clinic, or a willing pharmacy. (Link to [call/email your LHD administrator](#).)

A hub and spoke model will require the recipient of the vaccine (the hub) to complete an on-line transfer form in I-CARE to share vaccine with a local primary care office (even if in same system). The receiver of the transfer (the office) would need to be an approved COVID-19 vaccine provider. The office would need to arrange pick up of the vaccine from the hub and use it within the allowable time.

Taking Every Opportunity to Vaccinate

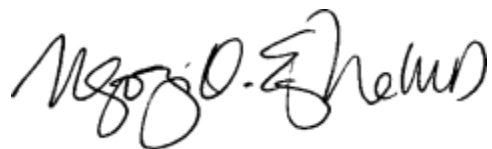
While we seek to minimize vaccine wastage, our primary goal is to take every opportunity to vaccinate. Guidance on minimizing vaccine wastage may be found in the **attached SIREN – Guidance on COVID-19 Vaccine Wastage, May 11, 2021.**

Follow-Up Webinars

The Illinois Department of Public Health will be conducting CME-accredited webinars for primary care providers to review this effort and answer questions. These webinars will be promoted through your professional organization. We hope you will join us.

Much gratitude to you for your essential and continuing role in ending this pandemic.

Sincerely,



Ngozi O. Ezike, MD
Director