

FAQs for Pennsylvania's Provider Network: COVID-19 Vaccine

From daily "PA COVID-19 Provider Allocation Discussion" WebEx calls from Mar 29-Apr 2, 2021

Note: Daily calls are not currently being recorded

Expanded Special Initiative

Who should we reach out to, to receive Janssen vaccine for agricultural workers? We haven't received guidance on how to get vaccine.

Reach out directly to the Department of Agriculture. They have a contact person who is working with the DOH to match providers with vaccine.

Is there a deadline for scheduling 1B patients as there was with the 1A mandate?

There isn't a deadline at this time, but we encourage you to schedule all 1B patients who contact you prior to moving to 1C on 12 April.

Provider Network and Administration

When are we going to see the Janssen product release for all providers? How about Pfizer?

- We are starting to receive more Janssen vaccine and we're ensuring that this vaccine is utilized in areas where a one-shot dose can be leveraged to quickly vaccinate special populations. Providers will be able to order Janssen in the future when supply increases.
- Allocation of Pfizer is taken into consideration on a weekly basis and is allocated based on the provider's capacity to properly store the Pfizer product. You may request Pfizer in the weekly vaccine request form.

When will small providers receive doses again? We have elderly in our area who need to be vaccinated.

There will be an expansion to the federal retail pharmacy partnership, so everyone will have access to vaccine within five miles from their home. The increase will be from 17,000 to 40,000 locations. State allocations will be expanded to additional providers as we receive more vaccine and the immediate need for high throughput subsidies.

We receive vaccine at our central location but want to administer at a second location. Is this considered "repositioning"?

Yes. Repositioning is when you receive a vaccine at a location but there are occasions where you want to administer at a different location. Redistribution is giving vaccine to another provider to administer separately. Redistributions must be approved by DOH. Please report all vaccinations through your central location in PA-SIIS.

Is there a list of Area Agency on Aging locations to which we can redirect our patients?

We sent out a notification on local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) locations for them to coordinate, but if the provider isn't in the focused network, they may not have received this notification. We understand this is good information for all providers to have, so we will include this list in the [newsletter](#) next week. In the meantime, if you have elderly and vulnerable patients in your practice who want to be vaccinated and cannot find an appointment, please email the Resource Account at RA-DHCOVIDVAX@pa.gov and we will help connect them to a local AAA.

Are providers able to order doses for a specific population to administer a closed pod?

If you have a specific population of high-vulnerability Pennsylvanians that you would like to vaccinate please indicate this in your weekly survey so that we understand the use of doses (e.g., homeless, communities of color). We will consider additional doses for one-off efforts depending on supply. If you have an arrangement with employers to vaccinate at their pods, this is fine as long as you've established a partnership; however, DOH does not have additional doses to allocate for these efforts at this time.

Should we be receiving first doses again?

Providers should be completing the request for doses on a regular basis. At this time, allocations are still narrowed to a sub-set of providers. As we continue to move through the next few weeks, we will re-evaluate and notify providers if we will be expanding.

How do providers request volunteers from SERVPA Are we allowed to hire contractors to administer vaccine?

Yes, you may hire contracted professionals to administer vaccine. SERVPA is a database that allows potential volunteers to complete a profile with their demographics, credentials, contact information, etc. The system currently houses 43,056 responders. Designated administrators of each of our 246 organizations have the ability to send an "Availability Request" in several ways. The system has the capability of sending a message, phone call, text or all three at once to request a response for deployment. The Mission feature may also be used to designate a type of responder, such as medical and non-medical to manage an event.

If we receive vaccine, as a provider, are we required to be "open to the public"?

Yes, providers should administer outside of their existing patients. Per the Secretary's Order, providers are expected to administer vaccine to those beyond their own patient base. Please administer to everyone within the current phases 1A and 1B (as of April 5).

Can we request only 50 doses per week?

No, the minimum is 100 for Moderna and 1170 for Pfizer. This is a specification of the manufacturer and not in DOH's control.

If we have completed second doses and have some remaining doses, should we split our remaining allocation into first and second doses, or administer all as first doses and order additional second doses?

Please split your remaining allocation into first and second doses. Do NOT use 2nd doses as 1st doses, as we will not have corresponding 2nd doses for them.

PA-SIIS and Pulse Check

Can a report be generated from PA-SIIS specifically including race/ethnicity data?

Yes, providers can generate reports from PA-SIIS. Reports reflect clinical information such as monthly shot administration count as well as immunization coverage level can be obtained. You can see PA's overall performance on race/ethnicity published from PA-SIIS data [here](#), on the second page of the vaccine dashboard. On April 16, the PA-SIIS team will conduct a presentation that will hopefully address the questions that you have about the system.

When we receive and administer vaccine, we do so through the COVID-19 vaccine health program. Should we not include this information on the pulse checks?

All allocation information should be included in pulse check, including the vaccine you receive and administer. We ask the retail pharmacy partners to submit pulse checks as well, because we need to receive a complete understanding of what's happening in PA.

Are we required to submit a pulse check if we haven't received vaccine, yet?

If you have never received vaccine or administered vaccine, from either the state or federal allocation then you do not have to submit a pulse check.

Can a platform like PA-SIIS be used to help the public sign up to receive vaccine?

No, PA-SIIS doesn't have scheduling capabilities. Providers should schedule patients directly by setting up a system for online scheduling and taking appointments by phone.

Additional Questions

When will doses be shipped to county correctional facilities?

County facilities (separate from the Department of Corrections) are still working on this; a timeline is not available, yet.

Is there an expiration date on Moderna vials? How long are they good once placed in a freezer?

The newsletter published April 2 has detailed information on storage and vaccine shelf life. You can find additional information from the CDC [here](#).

We have a large non-English speaking population experiencing difficulty accessing providers due to language barriers. Is there a hotline I can direct them to, to help them secure appointments?

Email the Resource Account at RA-DHCOVIDVAX@pa.gov with specific information about your situation: location, ethnicity group, population totals, etc. and we will address the concern on a case-by-case basis. Providers can also find non-English language education materials [here](#).

Are colleges and university providers permitted to hold vaccination clinics solely for students and/or their employees?

Currently, there are no university providers in the focused provider network. If you're referring to partnering with a focused network provider, then that would be acceptable as long as the provider is adhering to the current guidelines. If there is a specific question, please submit this to the Resource Account at RA-DHCOVIDVAX@pa.gov.

Universities would like to be able to vaccinate students before they leave this summer. Is there discussion to provide Janssen in the near future so a second dose isn't needed?

Some students may fit into the 1A and 1B categories, but current initiatives for Janssen are focused on newly eligible and high-risk populations. Janssen will be opened up for broader ordering in the future as supply increases, but it may not be before the end of the school year. Students are encouraged to get vaccinated at one of the existing provider sites.