

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

From daily "PA COVID-19 Provider Allocation Discussion" WebEx calls from Apr 7 - Apr 16, 2021

Note: Daily calls are not currently being recorded

Phases 1B/1C and Phase 2

With the transition to Phase 1B and 1C, is the 80% throughput rule still in place? How about the vaccine repositioning and redistribution processes?

The 80% throughput rule for Moderna and Pfizer will continue unless there is an amendment to the order. The 80% throughput rule has been suspended for Janssen while the pause is in effect. Repositioning and redistribution processes are the same as they were in previous phases. If you anticipate not being able to meet the 80% target, then please order less vaccine for that week.

Are there plans to open mass vaccination sites or expand the provider network in Phase 2?

As far as mass vaccination sites, there are currently some larger clinics operated by providers in certain areas. Additional larger sites are dependent on vaccine supply and when Janssen will be available again. We have started actively updating the provider network as demand changes across the Commonwealth. Health equity is very important, and we are trying to reach everyone through a variety of data-driven initiatives and network updates.

Now that everyone is eligible (Phase 2) how do you control providers who have not followed the order and are not vaccinating?

We are actively monitoring inventory through the Pulse Check survey and PA-SIIS. We've reached out to providers to communicate the expectation of administering 80% of Moderna and Pfizer vaccine within 7 days of receipt. If we notice inventory piling up, we will reduce future allocations to providers until inventory is reduced.

Janssen Vaccine

What are the clinical or legal reasons why PA DOH has decided to extend the pause of Janssen for four additional days longer than the CDC?

The CDC pause is still in effect. Please monitor the [CDC website](#) for updates.

Is there a chance for the CMHD to increase their Moderna and Pfizer allocation due to the pause of Janssen?

Supply of Moderna and Pfizer from the federal government is still limited, and DOH has promised consistency of allocations to in-network providers to a certain level. If additional vaccine becomes available, as part of the normal weekly balancing of the allocation which takes into account local demand and inventory levels, DOH may allocate additional vaccine to the CMHDs; however, we cannot guarantee additional supply going forward.

How long will counties continue to receive allocations of Janssen? Will we receive the same amount each week or do we need to request a specific amount each week?

It is currently unknown when Janssen administrations will be continued. When that occurs, we advise you to continue ordering the amount you need each week so that we have a clear understanding of your need and can make allocation decisions based on the information you provide and how much supply is available.

How does Janssen arrive and how is it stored?

Janssen comes in increments of 100, like Moderna, but the increment includes 20 vials of 5 doses (Moderna is 10 vials of 10 doses). Janssen only needs to be refrigerated, not frozen. For more information on specific storage guidelines please refer to the [CDC website](#).

Can Janssen be used as an optional second dose to Moderna and Pfizer if neither of these second doses are available?

The CDC encourages everyone to stick with the same product for their second shot. There isn't enough data to fully support Janssen as a second dose to Moderna or Pfizer. If you need 2nd doses of Pfizer or Moderna, please order them on the weekly request form. If urgent, please email RA-DOHPASIS@pa.gov.

PA-SIIS and Provider Network

Providers are also struggling to get their demographics data back out of the system for reporting elsewhere. Is that data available to be extracted from PA-SIIS for the patients that they have vaccinated?

Please reach out directly to RA-DOHPASIS@pa.gov or at 877-774-4748 to receive assistance on a case-by-case basis.

How can a provider obtain a VFC PIN number?

VFC PIN number is a unique ID issued to providers who are enrolled with PA DOH's Vaccine for children (VFC) program. All the COVID -19 vaccine Providers who are already enrolled as a VFC provider will be using the same VFC PIN number issued by DOI earlier to request vaccines. However, newly enrolled COVID-19 vaccine providers who are not VFC providers are issued a new VFC PIN number which will be used to request COVID-19 vaccines.

First, providers must sign and submit COVID-19 vaccine provider enrollment agreement application with the Department of Immunizations. As the providers are approved and application is being processed, PA SIIS will send notifications to providers on mandatory SIIS training requirement. Once they have completed the mandatory training, they will be issued a SIIS account.

Follow steps below to access a VFC PIN number:

1. Log into the PA SIIS account with your username and password.
2. Select the clinic settings button on the left-hand side of the Avanza System screen.
3. Verify that your facility name is the clinic name field and update any additional info as needed.
4. On the upper right corner, you can see the VFC PIN number for your facility.
5. If unable to login to PA -SIIS, please reach out directly to our SIIS team at RA-PASIS@pa.gov.

Is there still a pharmacy partnership specifically with childcare providers or is that no longer since eligibility is open? Do we know how many childcare providers received vaccine?

This was a special target population when vaccinations were opened up to educators; three large providers were part of the partnership to help us vaccinate this group. Providers are still working through their lists.

Is PA-SIIS PIN the same as VTrckS number?

The VTrckS number is a completely different number that will not appear in PA-SIIS. If you need your VTrckS number reach out to the PA-SIIS resource account at RA-DHCOVICVAX@pa.gov. Providers can't see their VTrckS number in PA-SIIS. (VTrcks is the number associated with the CDC).

Is our baseline allocation expected to change after the shift from mass vaccination sites to targeted primary care providers?

Providers who are currently receiving doses as part of the focused network can continue to expect their orders to be filled up to the amount previously communicated as long as they are complying with the Governor's 80% administration order (currently only for Moderna and Pfizer). Additional allocations depend on several factors, such as the continuation of our ability to use Janssen and whether or not there is additional Moderna and Pfizer supply each week. Those doses will be allocated on a week-by-week basis for efforts such as updating the provider network or specific one-off equity initiatives.

Allocation and Administration

Should empty vials be placed in recycling or biohazard waste? How do we record waste?

Please place all used (empty) vaccine vials into biohazard waste. Within the next 60 days, providers will be asked to record their waste data in PA-SIIS. We will update you with this information as it becomes available.

Sometimes we're unable to pull six doses from the Pfizer vials. How do we document this?

Please notate in PA-SIIS anything you are unable to administer.

We have requested vaccine multiple times, for first doses, but have not received any type of response. Are we able to receive vaccine for the first time, or should we wait and stop sending requests?

Please ensure that you are a registered provider and filling out the weekly survey sent out every Thursday; due on Tuesdays at 8PM. Notification emails regarding first dose allocations are sent on Fridays. The email address provided in the weekly survey is where you should receive the communication. Please ensure that our emails are not blocked by your server and check your spam folder.

Should we expect to be allocated second doses for those who receive first doses at other locations? Do we track them and include them in our survey?

We encourage everyone to receive their 2nd dose in the same location as they received their 1st dose. However, we understand that is not possible in every case and will support you with second doses as you work to vaccinate the community. We expect numbers may not properly align, please be sure to include an explanation in the notes in your survey.

Are large providers required to enter info into PA-SIIS?

All providers large and small are required to report their data. The way they report their data depends on how they get their vaccine. Some large providers receive federal allocation, and they are still required to report.

Is there a database we can access to determine which vaccine a patient received if they're from another state?

Unfortunately, we are unable to access individual records from other states. If the patient has their vaccination card it should be annotated on that.

Q&A – Dr. Steve Alles, DOH and Miral Fumakia, Moderna

Is there an update on how long immunity lasts after being fully vaccinated? Will patients need a booster?

We have not yet received any guidance on this topic from the FDA or CDC.

Does data exist on how long natural immunity lasts with or without the vaccine?

If patients acquire COVID then there is a certain level of immunity build up in the body. However, a person should be vaccinated regardless of whether they had COVID-19. In terms of immunity, it's difficult to tell how long natural immunity lasts from vaccination. We have to keep measuring and researching this.

How do we respond to patients who ask why the vaccine isn't fully approved by the FDA?

It is important to remember that in public health emergencies, such as a pandemic, the development process may not follow routine procedures. However, these COVID-19 vaccines are going through clinical trials that are being conducted according to the rigorous standards set by the FDA. With advanced technology available today, this process is able to be expedited. For an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to be issued for a vaccine, the FDA must determine that the known and potential benefits outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine.

Is Moderna planning to roll out a single dose vaccine?

This will be considered in the near future but for the meantime we encourage everyone to get both doses of the current vaccine.

How should we respond to patients who are concerned about long term side effects of the vaccine?

Providers should remind patients that the research shows that nothing out of the ordinary occurs in terms of side effects from the vaccine. The vaccine is much better to receive than the long-term side effects of the actual COVID-19 disease.

Do doses still expire after six hours if they've been drawn into syringes?

Unpunctured vials are good for 24 hours stored at room temperature. As soon as you puncture the vial, the vaccine is good for only 12 hours.

At what temperature should vaccine be stored?

More information on the specific storage requirements of the Moderna vaccine can be found here:

<https://www.modernatx.com/covid19vaccine-eua/providers/storage-handling>

Additional Questions

Any initiatives regarding the homeless population, either through the Department of Human Services (DHS) or otherwise? Is there a plan to use Janssen for this effort?

DHS is actively working with around 70 providers to coordinate a widespread effort to vaccinate people experiencing homelessness. There are also equity efforts and regional allocations of Janssen.

What is the current status of vaccine for residents in long-term care facilities?

Many long term care facilities already received vaccine through a federal government program shortly after Pfizer and Moderna were approved. We are also pairing up remaining facilities with provider partners to support vaccinations for new residents and staff.

Is there an effort to encourage college students who are hesitant to get vaccinated?

We are making a strong effort to address vaccine hesitancy. There is currently a media campaign underway to encourage all adults 16+ to get vaccinated. If you would like to get involved or get materials to support combatting hesitancy, please visit the [COVID resource library](#) or reach out to RA-DOHCOVIDVAX@pa.gov.

Given the state is opening vaccine to all, are there any updates on Philadelphia?

Philadelphia has always been a separate awardee in the allocation program, with a different vaccine allocation.

A lot of university students are requesting their second doses in their home state or county after they leave campus where they receive their first dose. The students are hesitant to get vaccinated if they can't get their second shot in their home state or county. Should we administer second doses to students who received their first dose elsewhere?

We've advised people to get their second dose where they received their first dose. We can't speak to what other states are doing, but most states will be fully open very soon. We'll see some university students come to PA to get their second doses when they received their first elsewhere, so we're hoping it will balance out in the end.

Any updates on the Federal Dialysis Partnership Vaccination Program?

The federal government was partnering with many dialysis programs to allocate vaccine. There are two national chains of dialysis that are included in the partnership. We have confirmation that they have vaccine, and they are redistributing under their own, internal models.

Can we request extra vaccination cards?

There are 105 provided in each batch of Moderna. The CDC has been hesitant to provide extra to help minimize forgery.

Where do we get buttons for those who have been vaccinated?

You can order several types of resources from the PA Unites Against COVID campaign [here](#).

