

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Licensing and Certification
11 State House Station
41 Anthony Avenue
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel.: (207) 287-9300; Toll Free: (800) 791-4080
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay); Fax: (207) 287-5815

Date: September 23, 2022

To: Nursing Facilities, Assisted Housing, ICF/IIDs

From: Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Re: Promoting COVID-19 Booster Vaccinations

Background

As we head into Fall, there is a potential for an increase in COVID-19 infections, in part due to waning immunity from vaccines and prior infection as well as from people spending more time inside because of colder weather.

Earlier this month, updated bivalent COVID-19 vaccines became available. These updated booster vaccines are specifically designed to combat the more-transmissible Omicron COVID-19 variant. The updated boosters are available for people who have completed their COVID-19 vaccine primary series.

Current Status

The updated COVID-19 booster is available throughout Maine. Right now, supplies of the Pfizer vaccine from facilities' usual pharmacies should be robust, while supplies of the Moderna vaccine may be limited. Facilities should be in touch with their regular pharmacy to arrange for resident and staff clinics.

The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services ("CMS") plans to offer resources to thousands of nursing homes so nursing homes have the tools to help residents and staff get vaccinated. This will include helping nursing homes schedule on-site vaccination clinics; meeting directly with nursing home administrators to help make a plan to get their staff and residents boosted; and offering office hours with technical assistance and support. We expect CMS to provide more details on their efforts shortly.

Additional Support

The Maine Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) is working with ETHOS Marketing, DHHS's Office of Aging and Disability Services, the Division of Licensing and Certification, and the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) to implement an outreach campaign to encourage direct care and support professionals to get COVID boosters and this year's influenza vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine and the influenza vaccine can be given at the same time; there is no waiting period between these two vaccines.

The campaign will include videos called “Power of Care,” which feature interviews of actual Maine direct care and support professionals, long-term care residents, and their family members. The videos will be shared across all social media platforms. A landing page is in development, and once done it will provide immunization information for direct care and support staff, with a link to Maine CDC. Additionally, LTCOP will be developing a Power of Care vaccination ambassador program to provide additional peer encouragement for vaccination. These resources will be available in early October and will be shared with all facilities.