

Guidance to attendant care providers

Administration of COVID-19 vaccine to A&D, TBI and CHOICE participants

Thursday, January 14, 2021

On Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021, Governor Holcomb announced disbursement of the COVID-19 vaccine to individuals age 80 years and older, which includes many A&D and TBI waiver clients. Please review the attached COVID-19 vaccine flyer and distribute to your clients who meet the age criteria.

Each local Indiana Area Agency on Aging is working to contact clients affiliated with waiver and non-waiver services that fall within the selected age category. Care managers within each local area agency on aging will assist individuals with registering to receive the vaccine. They will also assist with coordinating transportation to receive the vaccine as well as coordination for homebound clients.

As you interact with clients, family members, caregivers, etc., Please confirm that the client has connected with his/her/their AAA and has registered to receive the vaccine. The client may also register by calling 211 or by registering themselves at <http://ourshot.in.gov/>. At the time the client registers for the first vaccine dose, they will also set up a time to receive the second dose.

While attendant care aides are not able to bill, specifically, medical transportation, an attendant care aide may accompany the client to the appointment to obtain the vaccine. Reimbursement will be rendered to the provider for all hands-on activities that occur while assisting the client during the trip. Please have the attendant care aide contact the client's care manager if able to assist with activities of daily living when the client attends the vaccine appointment.

The Division of Aging expects attendant care providers will receive questions from waiver/non-waiver clients about the vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide the following guidance and examples for how to respond to frequently asked questions about the vaccine.

CDC guidance: Responding to COVID vaccine questions from clients

Engaging in effective COVID-19 vaccine conversations with clients

- I. The following techniques and resources provide support for discussing vaccination with clients. Whether you have these discussions with your clients during an in-person visit, through virtual visits or telephonically, your strong vaccine recommendation is the most important part of the conversation.
 - a. Start from a place of empathy and understanding
 - i. The pandemic has been stressful for many people. The first step is to acknowledge the disruption COVID-19 has caused in all our lives, providing an opportunity to recognize common concerns that can be addressed by a vaccine.
 - b. Assume clients will want to be vaccinated but may not know when to expect it.



- c. Provide information to clients about the timeline for COVID-19 vaccines based on state guidance.
 - i. It is understandable how concerning it could be for clients if they cannot be vaccinated right away. Encourage them to continue taking steps to protect themselves from COVID-19.
 - ii. Let them know how you plan to share updates about vaccine availability.
- d. Give your strong recommendation
 - i. Let your guests know you plan to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for them. Clients consistently rank providers as their most trusted source for vaccine information. In this unique position, you are able to provide a strong recommendation that is critical for vaccine acceptance.
 - ii. Share the importance of COVID-19 vaccines to protect clients' health, as well as the health of those around them, or talk about your personal plans to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

Example.

"I strongly recommend you get a COVID-19 vaccine once it is widely available..."

"...This shot is especially important for you because of your underlying health condition."

"...I believe in this vaccine so strongly that I plan to get it as soon as it is available."
- e. Listen to and respond to client questions
 - i. If a client has concerns or questions, this doesn't necessarily mean they won't accept a COVID-19 vaccine. Sometimes clients simply want your answers to their questions.
 - ii. Your willingness to listen to their concerns will play a major role in building trust in you and your recommendation. Make it clear that you understand they have questions, and you want to answer them, so they feel confident in choosing to get vaccinated.
 - iii. Seek to understand your clients' concerns and provide information they need in a way they can understand it. Explore some of the vaccine questions patients ask about most and find tips for how to answer their questions: [Answering patient's questions](#).
- f. Wrapping up the conversation
 - i. Once you've answered their questions, let clients know that you are open to continuing the conversation.
 - ii. Encourage clients to take at least one action, such as:
 - 1. Scheduling another appointment, or
 - 2. Reading the additional information you provide them about COVID-19 vaccination.

Client questions about vaccine safety

- II. Because these vaccines are new, your clients' comfort level with when to get vaccinated will vary. Continue to remind them about the importance of getting a COVID-19 vaccine during future routine visits. Clients may ask: *How do we really know if COVID-19 vaccines are safe?* To respond, you can explain how:
- The Food and Drug Administration carefully reviews all safety data from clinical trials and an authorizes emergency vaccine use only when the expected benefits outweigh potential risks.
 - The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices reviews all safety data before recommending any COVID-19 vaccine for use. [Learn how ACIP makes vaccine recommendations.](#)
 - FDA and CDC will continue to monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines, to make sure even very rare side effects are identified.
 - A client should not be vaccinated if he/she currently has a fever or are not feeling well, are pregnant or are younger than 16.

Example:

COVID-19 vaccines were tested in large clinical trials to make sure they meet safety standards. Many people were recruited to participate in these trials to see how the vaccines offers protection to people of different ages, races and ethnicities, as well as those with different medical conditions.

Client questions about known side effects

- III. Some COVID-19 vaccines may be more reactogenic than vaccines that people are familiar with. It is important to set this expectation with your client, in case they experience a strong reaction. Clients may ask: *How much will the shot hurt? Can it cause you to get very sick?* To respond, you can:
- Explain what the most common side effects from vaccination are and how severe they may be.
 - Provide a comparison if it is appropriate for the client (for example, pain after receiving Shingrix for older adults who have received it).
 - Make sure clients know that a fever is a potential side effect and when they should seek medical care.
 - Let them know that symptoms typically go away on their own within a week. Also let them know when they should seek medical care if their symptoms don't go away.
 - Explain that the vaccine cannot give someone COVID-19.
 - Explain that side effects are a sign that the immune system is working.



Example:

“Most people do not have serious problems after being vaccinated. We will understand more about mild side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine before we start to use it. However, your arm may be sore, red or warm to the touch. These symptoms usually go away on their own within a week. Some people report getting a headache or fever when getting a vaccine. These side effects are a sign that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to do. It is working and building up protection to disease.”

Client questions about unknown, serious, long-term side effects

- IV. Due to the relative speed with which these vaccines were developed, client concerns about long-term side effects are reasonable and to be expected. Clients may ask: *How do we know that these vaccines are safe when they are so new? Couldn't they cause problems that we don't know about yet? What about long-term problems?* To respond, you can:
- Explain how FDA and CDC are continuing to monitor safety, to make sure even long-term side effects are identified.
 - Reassure clients that COVID-19 vaccines will be continuously monitored for safety after authorization, and ACIP will take action to address any safety problems detected.
 - Compare the potential serious risk of COVID-19 infection to what is currently known about the safety of COVID-19 vaccines.
 - For Pfizer, the side effects reported were fatigue at 3.8% and headache at 2%. Individuals may experience fatigue, headache or other symptoms such as fever, just as they do with a flu shot or shingles vaccine. These are temporary and indicate that your body's immune system is reacting properly.

Example:

COVID-19 vaccines are being tested in large clinical trials to assess their safety. However, it does take time, and more people getting vaccinated before we learn about very rare or long-term side effects. That is why safety monitoring will continue. CDC has an independent group of experts that reviews all the safety data as it comes in and provides regular safety updates. If a safety issue is detected, immediate action will take place to determine if the issue is related to the COVID-19 vaccine and determine the best course of action.

Client questions about dosages

- V. The same vaccine brand must be used for both shots. Clients may ask: *How many shots am I going to need?* To respond, you can:
- Explain that two shots are generally needed to provide the best protection against COVID-19 and that the shots are given several weeks apart. The first shot primes the immune system, helping it recognize the virus, and the second shot strengthens the immune response.
 - When applicable, assist the client in contacting his/or local Area Agency on Aging or 211 to register for a vaccine appointment.



Example:

Nearly all COVID-19 vaccines being studied in the United States require two shots. The first shot starts building protection, but everyone has to come back a few weeks later for the second one to get the most protection the vaccine can offer.

Client questions about cost

- VI. Clients may be hesitant to receive the vaccine due to unknown cost and affordability. Clients may ask: *How much do I have to pay for the vaccine?* To respond, you can:
- a. Explain that under federal guidelines, no one is to be charged to receive the vaccine.
 - b. However, the guest's provider may bill your insurance a \$28 administration fee.

Client questions about PPE after vaccination

- VII. Clients may expect to stop wearing personal protective equipment and taking other precautions after being vaccinated. Clients may ask: *Do I have to wear a face mask and social distance after being vaccinated?* To respond, you can:
- a. Explain that this vaccine will significantly increase our arsenal as we fight COVID-19 and help us win this battle.
 - b. As we know, there will be a limited supply of vaccine initially; it will still be essential to rely on the tools that we know work to fight this disease, including wearing masks, practicing social distancing and staying home if you're ill.