

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program accessible on the ReachMD network. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/the-drug-report/cdc-playbook-for-covid-19-vaccine-distribution/11994/>

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CDC Playbook for COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

Announcer:

You're listening to The Drug Report on ReachMD, hosted by Linda Bernstein, Pharm.D., Clinical Professor on the Volunteer Faculty of the School of Pharmacy, University of California, San Francisco.

Dr. Bernstein:

Welcome to the Drug Report, with special focus on the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of the U.S. government is to have enough COVID-19 vaccine for all people in the United States who wish to receive it in order to decrease COVID-19-related illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths and to help society get back to normal. Early in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program, there may be a limited supply of the vaccine, and it may be necessary to prioritize administration for those critical to the response, providing direct care, and maintaining societal function, as well as those at highest risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published version 2.0 of its COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations on October 29, 2020. This document offers guidance and resources for state, territorial, tribal and local public health programs and their partners for planning and executing a vaccination response to COVID-19 within their local jurisdictions.

The document describes the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Strategy for COVID-19 in which Health and Human Services is partnering with pharmacies to increase access to the COVID-19 vaccine once it is authorized or approved and recommended for use in the United States. These pharmacy partners will receive a direct allocation of the vaccine which will boost access to the vaccine when supply increases and vaccine is recommended after the initial vaccine distribution to critical populations. The report notes that more than 86 percent of the population lives within five miles of a community pharmacy, providing the necessary reach and access to the COVID-19 vaccine to assist with the overall vaccination efforts nationwide. The program will not include every pharmacy in the United States. Those not included are urged to be part of the vaccination program and coordinate with their jurisdictions to become a vaccine provider.

The report cites several reasons why pharmacists will be an excellent resource for the upcoming vaccination program. Pharmacists are trained to provide vaccinations and already fill that role in their communities. They are a trusted health resource on COVID-19 in their communities by counseling patients and administering tests. They are able to quickly respond to the demand as they have an existing infrastructure and a large number of pharmacists can administer vaccines. The CDC has worked extensively with pharmacy chains to improve pandemic preparedness, conduct vaccine throughput exercises, and assess store and organizational response capabilities.

As of the date of publication, program participants include Walgreens, CVS Health Corporation, Walmart Stores including Sam's, Rite Aid Corporation, The Kroger, Publix, Costco, Albertsons Companies, Hy-Vee, Meijer, H-E-B and Retail Business Services, comprising over 35,000 store locations. Additional partners are expected to sign on to the program.

Pharmacy partners must sign a COVID-19 pharmacy partner agreement to participate. Before receiving COVID-19 vaccine, the partner must propose, in writing, its minimum capacity for vaccine administration, including the number and location of facilities that will administer COVID-19 vaccine, the estimated number of COVID-19 vaccine doses that each facility will be able to administer within defined periods, and estimated cold chain storage capacity.

Pharmacy partners will directly order and receive allocation of COVID-19 vaccine from the federal government. They will receive it at no cost to the pharmacy chain and will be administered at retail locations at no cost to vaccine recipients.

There will be daily reporting requirements between the pharmacy partner and the CDC on vaccine orders, inventory and administration.

Pharmacy partners will provide a point of contact for reach for each jurisdiction. Jurisdictions may choose to opt out of having pharmacies in their area receive allocations through this program.

For questions about the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Strategy for COVID-19 Vaccination Program, please contact eocevent481@cdc.gov.

Announcer:

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