

December 17, 2020

Dear Long Term Care Facility Colleagues:

Tennessee anticipates receipt of 56,550 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine beginning the week of December 14, 2020, and receipt of 115,200 doses of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine beginning the week of December 21st (*tentative*). The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine received Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on December 11th and subsequent [recommendations](#) from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) were released on December 13th; similar steps are expected for the Moderna Vaccine in the coming days.

Vaccine Allocation Prioritization

The forthcoming vaccine shipments will be used to provide first and second vaccine doses to individuals qualifying for Phase 1a1, as detailed in the Tennessee COVID-19 Vaccine Plan (last updated December 2, 2020 and found [here](#)). The Plan was informed by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's Framework for the Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the ACIP, and a robust stakeholder group consisting of 30 organizations, offices, and associations representing a wide swath of Tennesseans.

Tennessee's Phase 1a1 includes:

- individuals working or volunteering full-time or part-time in hospitals and free-standing emergency departments who have direct patient exposure or contact with potentially infectious materials
- individuals providing home health services
- staff of mass COVID-19 testing sites
- individuals providing student health services in K-12 schools, colleges and universities
- **staff and residents of long-term care facilities (LTCF), including skilled nursing facilities, assisted living centers, residential homes for the aged**, group homes for individuals incapable of independent living, and residential facilities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities
- first responders (volunteer or paid) with direct public exposure.

As demand for vaccine will exceed supply, individuals qualifying for Phase 1a1 should be further prioritized to provide individuals from the following groups at the first opportunity:

- age >65 years
- currently undergoing treatment for cancer
- history of chronic kidney disease
- history of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- history of serious cardiac disease (excluding hypertension)
- history of sickle cell disease (excluding sickle cell trait)
- history of diabetes types 1 or 2
- those with obesity with body mass index >30
- history of solid organ transplant (heart, lung, liver, kidney, pancreas)

In addition, residents and staff with documented acute SARS-CoV-2 infection in the preceding 90 days may choose to delay vaccination until near the end of the 90 day period in order to facilitate vaccination of those who remain susceptible to infection, as current evidence suggests reinfection is uncommon during this period after initial infection.

Vaccine Administration in LTCF

Long-term care facility staff and residents will be vaccinated with the Moderna vaccine through the federal partnership with Walgreens and CVS, through agreements with local pharmacies, or through vaccination strike teams deployed across the state.

LTCF may not yet have received information from Walgreens or CVS even if they are appropriately registered with the federal pharmacy partnership (frequently asked questions about the pharmacy partnership available from CDC [here](#)); communication from their pharmacy partner will be forthcoming in the next 1-2 weeks. Pharmacy partners will provide end-to-end management of on-site vaccinations, including providing consent forms, on-site administration of vaccine to resident and staff not already vaccinated and fulfillment of reporting requirements at no cost to the facilities. Site visits for facilities participating in the federal pharmacy partnership will not happen prior to December 28th.

Registration for the pharmacy partnership is closed; however, TDH is working with the Tennessee Pharmacists Association (TPA) to connect facilities that did not register with the federal program with local pharmacies to provide vaccine.

If long term care facilities do not know who their pharmacy partner is, or do not have a pharmacy partner, they may contact the Tennessee Pharmacists Association (Covid19@tnpharm.org) for more information.

Please note, although LTCF residents and staff are Phase 1a1, we expect that it may take several months to vaccinate this entire population. More information on timelines and additional vaccine supply will be forthcoming as soon as available.

General Vaccine Information and Resources

[General](#) COVID-19 vaccine information, as well as [information](#) for health care providers, may be found on the TDH COVID-19 [website](#). Please refer to the frequently asked questions [document](#) (updated weekly) for information about vaccine administration in healthcare settings.

Members of the public (including facility residents/families) with questions may be referred to the website or to 877-857-2945. Live operators are available from 10am-8pm Monday-Friday and 10am-4pm Saturday and Sunday. Health care providers with questions may visit the health care provider [website](#) or call 615-741-7247 to speak with a member of the TDH Communicable and Environmental Diseases and Emergency Preparedness Program (CEDEP) team.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership,

Vincent Davis
Director of Office of Health Care Facilities