

## VACCINE INFORMATION FOR AAAs TO SHARE WITH OLDER ADULTS

Pennsylvania's Vaccine Plan Phase 1A coverage has been expanded to include older adults age 65+ and anyone 16-64 with certain serious medical conditions. Places that will provide the vaccines include hospitals, pharmacies, health and urgent care centers, Veterans Affairs hospitals and home health agencies.

The Department of Health's Interim Vaccine Plan, which is being continually updated, is here:

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Vaccine/Pages/Vaccine.aspx>

Because older adults, especially those with underlying conditions, have increased risk of serious illness from COVID-19, this expansion is welcome news. However, there are several challenges facing our older adult 65+ audience in obtaining a vaccine:

- 1) **Vaccine is currently extremely limited** and varies from provider to provider and from county to county. This can be frustrating for older adults who are understandably anxious to get a vaccine.
- 2) **Not all older adults have access to the web** or are comfortable going online, so many older adults need assistance in understanding and navigating the process for getting an appointment.

As more vaccines become available, the AAAs, who are trusted in their local communities, can play a role in helping older adults work through the process of getting one.

## MESSAGES TO HELP OLDER ADULTS:

- Remind callers that right now, there is simply not yet enough vaccine to inoculate everyone who is eligible. So, even if you are eligible, you may have to wait to get an appointment to receive a vaccine.
- Just as the state Department of Health must evaluate the amount of vaccine supplied to Pennsylvania from week to week, local providers of the vaccine must also wait to find out each week how much they will have available.
- Remind callers to stay patient. Supply remains limited but new information is being posted by the Department of Health. As more vaccine becomes available, more providers will be able to serve greater numbers of older adults.

In the meantime, older adults who are trying to obtain the vaccine can do the following as per guidelines issued by DOH:

### **Step 1: Confirm Eligibility**

#### WHAT OLDER ADULTS NEED TO DO:

Use the [Vaccine Eligibility Quiz](#) to determine if you are eligible to receive the vaccine.

#### HOW WE CAN HELP THEM:

- Encourage older adults who can go online to take this eligibility quiz. It does not take long; there are only 5 yes/no questions.
- ***For older adults without internet access***, AAAs can walk them through the quiz over the phone.
- If older adults have questions about whether or not they should be getting a vaccine, encourage them to talk with their doctor about the safety, effectiveness, benefits and risks of the vaccine.



## Step 2: Check for a Provider Near You with Vaccine

### WHAT OLDER ADULTS NEED TO DO:

Use the [vaccine provider map](#) to locate a provider near you who has the vaccine.

Vaccine providers are indicated by dots. **Green dots** mean that a provider may have vaccine. **Red dots** mean that the provider does not currently have vaccine. Click on a dot to see the provider, location and their contact information.

### HOW WE CAN HELP THEM:

- Walk callers through the Department of Health vaccine provider map to see who the providers are near them, and how to contact them.
- Many providers will have limited supply and go through weekly supplies almost immediately. Remind older adults to continue to check the vaccine provider map to find a location, then schedule a vaccine appointment with the provider you select. ***For an older adult without internet access***, if you are able to check the availability of vaccine appointments at a particular provider for an older adult, please do so.
- Your county may want to consider listing the sites and contact information on your website as a reference for callers. You may also wish to share with your followers on social media.



## Step 3: Call to Set Up Your Appointment

### WHAT OLDER ADULTS NEED TO DO:

Call or email the provider of your choice to set up your appointment.

### HOW WE CAN HELP THEM:

- There is usually a contact name and number, for most of the providers, on DOH's map. Providers will have their own procedures for how they take appointments. Some of these providers may take a name and number over the phone and will call the older adult back if and when they have enough

vaccine supply to include them. Other providers such as pharmacies may not take phone calls and may instead ask that you register on their website.

- ***If an older adult does not have access to a computer***, AAAs should assist them in locating nearby vaccine providers and help guide them through the process of contacting them and either make an appointment or leave information.
- Encourage older adults to keep their appointments. If they must cancel, do so as soon as possible.
- Discourage older adults from going “vaccine shopping” – making multiple appointments. While it may seem smart to have a “backup” appointment, this can prevent other people from getting a vaccine.

## **Step 4: Don't Forget the Second Dose!**

### **WHAT OLDER ADULTS NEED TO DO:**

The two COVID vaccines that are currently available are given in two doses, given a couple of weeks to a month apart.

Everyone receiving the vaccine **MUST** get both doses. The same provider must administer both shots.

### **HOW WE CAN HELP THEM:**

Remind them that:

- Once you are able to get to a provider to receive your first shot, that provider will give you a card to keep track of both of your vaccine doses.
- When you go back for your second shot, you need to bring the card with you.
- Once you've had your first shot, you will receive a reminder phone call, text or postcard.
- In between shots, you are not fully immunized. You must continue to wear a mask anytime you leave your home, or anytime someone outside your circle is in your home.

## **WHAT ABOUT COST?**

The vaccination is free to all; however certain providers may be able to charge a fee to administer the shot. Older adults may want to ask their provider if there is a fee.

## **IS THERE TRANSPORTATION AVAILABLE?**

AAAs can also refer older adults to shared-ride or other organized transportation as per their local resources.

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