

Breaking News – Pharmacists Authorized to Provide COVID-19 Vaccines to Patients 3 and Older

In response to [calls](#) from ASHP and other national pharmacy groups, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has authorized state-licensed pharmacists, and state-licensed pharmacy interns acting under the supervision of a state-licensed pharmacist, to order and administer any future FDA-licensed or –authorized COVID-19 vaccines to patients 3 years of age and older. This new authority builds on [pharmacist authority to provide COVID-19 testing](#) and to [offer vaccinations to pediatric patients](#) older than 3 years of age.

The [new HHS guidance](#) on COVID-19 vaccination recognizes pharmacists as “covered persons” under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act for the purposes of providing COVID-19 vaccinations. The guidance further notes that under the PREP Act, pharmacists may be immune from any liability stemming from provision of FDA-approved or FDA-licensed COVID-19 vaccinations.

Similar to the recent HHS extension of pharmacists’ authority to provide pediatric vaccinations, HHS notes that under the PREP Act, the COVID-19 vaccination authority laid out in the guidance would preempt any state law that would prevent pharmacists from providing the service. States retain the ability to further extend pharmacists’ authority to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to patients younger than 3 years of age. Additionally, the COVID-19 vaccination guidance lists a number of requirements that must be met for pharmacists to order and administer any future COVID-19 vaccine:

- The vaccine must be FDA-authorized or FDA-licensed.
- The vaccination must be ordered and administered according to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices’ (ACIP’s) COVID-19 vaccine recommendation.
- The licensed pharmacist must complete a practical training program of at least 20 hours that is approved by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE). This training program must include hands-on injection technique, clinical evaluation of indications and contraindications of vaccines, and the recognition and treatment of emergency reactions to vaccines.
- The licensed or registered pharmacy intern must complete a practical training program that is approved by the ACPE. This training program must include hands-on injection technique, clinical evaluation of indications and contraindications of vaccines, and the recognition and treatment of emergency reactions to vaccines.
- The licensed pharmacist and licensed or registered pharmacy intern must have a current certificate in basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- The licensed pharmacist must complete a minimum of two hours of ACPE-approved, immunization-related continuing pharmacy education during each State licensing period.
- The licensed pharmacist must comply with recordkeeping and reporting requirements of the jurisdiction in which he or she administers vaccines, including informing the patient’s primary-care provider when available, submitting the required immunization information to the State or local immunization information system (vaccine registry), complying with requirements related to reporting adverse events, and complying with requirements whereby the person administering a vaccine must review the vaccine registry or other vaccination records prior to administering a vaccine.

- The licensed pharmacist must, if the patient is 18 years of age or younger, inform the patient and the adult caregiver accompanying the patient of the importance of a well-child visit with a pediatrician or other licensed primary-care provider and refer patients as appropriate.
- The licensed pharmacist and the licensed or registered pharmacy intern must comply with any applicable requirements (or conditions of use) as set forth in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 vaccination provider agreement and any other federal requirements that apply to the administration of COVID-19 vaccine(s).

ASHP anticipates that HHS and CMS will provide additional rulemaking or guidance regarding other details related to COVID-19 vaccination, including payment methodology. ASHP will update members as additional details are released.