

NORTH CAROLINA COVID-19 Response Vaccine Provider Toolkit



Updated 11/22/21

To all health care providers:

1. We thank you for your tremendous efforts over the course of this pandemic in helping our community prevent and fight COVID-19.
2. North Carolinians still need you! They want to get their information and their vaccines from their trusted health care provider. Your skills answering patient questions about the COVID-19 vaccines and offering vaccines in a place that people trust will help people feel confident to get vaccinated are critical.
3. The vaccine environment has shifted, and so have we. In the beginning, our vaccine efforts relied on high volume and fast administration. Now, with greater supply of vaccine and more flexibility, it is easier for primary care providers to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE IN THIS PROCESS.

This document is meant to serve as a quick reference guide for all health care providers – from those considering becoming a COVID-19 vaccine provider, to those currently vaccinating individuals in North Carolina!

There are a few other resources created by the NCDHHS team where you can find more in-depth information, and they will often be referenced throughout this guide.

- [Provider Guidance for Vaccinating North Carolinians](#)
- [CVMS Trainings Page](#)
- [NCIR Trainings Page](#)
- [CVMS Provider Enrollment Roadmap](#)
- [NCIR Provider Enrollment Roadmap](#)

1) I'm Deciding Whether to be a COVID-19 Vaccine Provider.

All health care providers in the United States have the ability to be a COVID-19 vaccine provider after meeting some basic standards as stated in the list of [CDC requirements](#). All eligible health care providers who are interested in administering COVID-19 vaccines can submit an application via [North Carolina's COVID-19 Vaccine Management System](#) (CVMS) to enroll in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program and begin vaccine management in either CVMS or the North Carolina Immunization Registry (NCIR).

We have updated our guidance so that it is simpler and easier to manage vaccine allocations logistics and expectations, in order to support operations of any size. Please check out a one-page quick reference guide on [Getting Started as a Vaccine Provider](#).

Do I Qualify to Become a Provider?

- *Do I have enough staff to qualify?*

Yes! We encourage incorporating COVID-19 vaccinations into your routine patient visits, so in most cases, you should not require more staff than you already have. Every provider who is eligible to administer vaccines and does so as part of normal clinical operations brings North Carolina one step closer to recovery.

- ***Will we have training available to us?***

Yes! On our COVID-19 response website, you can find ample [CVMS training resources](#) and [NCIR training resources](#), including live sessions, pre-recorded sessions, user guides, and job aids to walk you through the entire provider process.

- ***Do I have equipment that meets the storage and handling standards?***

Likely! And we will help you! Providers do need appropriate equipment to properly store COVID-19 vaccines to ensure vaccine potency, however we have COVID-19 vaccines available that can be stored under a variety of conditions. In fact, all three vaccine products can be stored under refrigerated conditions for at least some period of time. You **do not** have to purchase an ultra-cold freezer to participate in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program. COVID-19 vaccine products have time-limited allowances for storage using conditions (i.e., frozen, refrigerated, room temperature, after mixing, after puncturing vial or drawing into syringe) beyond the primary recommended environment and temperature range. Proper temperature monitoring equipment using CDC approved digital data logger (DDL) for each storage unit used will ensure safe administration of COVID-19 vaccine. The CDC [Vaccine Storage and Handling toolkit](#) is up-to-date with specific storage and handling information for all COVID-19 vaccines. For an overview of the various storage allowances for each COVID-19 vaccine product, check out CDC's [COVID-19 Vaccine Quick Reference Guide for Healthcare Professionals](#).

- ***Do I have enough space to become a provider?***

Almost certainly! And we can help you assess your space! If you have enough space to keep any amount of vaccines in your fridge/freezer, then administering and storing vaccines is something you can incorporate into your day-to-day operations. We can work with your office to provide smaller quantities of vaccine based on your patient population needs.

- ***Can I vaccinate in my practice setting?***

Likely! At this stage of our COVID-19 vaccine journey, most practices can provide vaccinations in some way. We understand that many providers cannot manage large-scale vaccine roll-out operations, and that's okay. You can request small amounts of vaccine and offer as part of regular patient care or walk-in appointments, even if this presents some risk of unused doses. Current CDC guidance is that providers should not miss any opportunities to vaccinate every eligible person.

- ***Do I see patients who might want the vaccine? That need the vaccine?***

Definitely! It is highly likely that the patients in your practice who have not yet been vaccinated will be looking to you as the trusted voice to inform them about the vaccine. By having the vaccine on hand, you are bringing this life-saving preventive service directly to your patients where and when it is needed.

- ***Will we be able to meet the guidelines and program expectations?***

Almost certainly! We have updated guidance and policies with a simpler, easier to manage allocations experience and expectations which allows North Carolina to support even the smallest vaccine operation. You can find more information in Section 16 of the [Provider Guidance Document](#) or the [Getting Started as a Vaccine Provider](#) one pager. Any concerns related to disposal, wastage, and unused vaccine and related materials can also be addressed in Section 13.6 of the [Provider Guidance Document](#).

More details can be found in Section 8 of the [Provider Guidance](#) about "Who can be a COVID-19 vaccine provider?" - both in the State of North Carolina and on the federal level - and includes details on key aspects of the provider agreement.

How Do I Start Talking to My Patients About the COVID-19 Vaccine?

Talk to your patients about the COVID-19 vaccine, whether you are planning to offer it or are directing your patients to vaccination sites. We have ready-made and customizable toolkits that can help you to promote vaccinations any time you are seeing a patient – whether or not your practice is currently administering vaccines.

And, once you become a vaccinating provider, it is even more important that you continue to share information and help spread the word. Below are communication tools and materials you can use to support your conversations.

Patient Communication Resources

You can access the NC DHHS [Communications Toolkit](#) for materials your practice or clinic can use to share the latest NC COVID-19 guidance and campaigns. Take a look at our current campaigns. **You Have a Spot. Take Your Spot.**, which includes sample social media posts, graphics and other materials for you and your organization to use. We also have a [Partner/Doctor Toolkit](#) with materials tailored for providers. It includes:

- [Provider Discussion Guide](#) to help you support your patients in their decision process.
- Templates to use to send email, snail mail and robocalls to your patients.
- Banners and graphics to post on your website and social media channels.
- [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) that are updated weekly.

2) I'm Committed to Becoming a COVID-19 Vaccine Provider, What's Next?

This step is about getting you enrolled in North Carolina's COVID-19 Vaccine Management System (CVMS) through the Provider Enrollment Portal. Start with identifying a single point of contact within your organization to manage NC DHHS communications and CVMS enrollment. They can attend a live [CVMS Provider Enrollment Training](#) session or review a recorded session prior to enrollment to learn more. Visit the [Provider Enrollment Roadmap](#) and the [Enrollment User Guides](#) to lead your organization through the process of enrolling in CVMS.

Next, determine how and to whom you wish to administer vaccines - this will guide your early planning steps. For example, do you want to host clinics or events? Do you want to vaccinate as part of regular patient visits? Will you only vaccinate your own patients, your patients and those that accompany them, or the general public as well? Will you allow walk-in appointments? For strategies and more information on these topics, see Sections 14 and 16 in the [Provider Guidance Document](#).

3) I am an Enrolled Provider in CVMS or NCIR. How Do I Make Sure I'm Really Ready?

This step is all about getting you set up to receive and document vaccine!

CVMS Users: Get Activated in the CVMS Provider Portal

Once you have determined how and to whom you wish to administer vaccines, you can begin by walking through the steps outlined in the [CVMS Provider Enrollment Roadmap](#), beginning at Step 3.

Important early steps include:

- Identifying who in your clinic will serve in specific CVMS roles (e.g., Location Manager, Healthcare Provider, Statewide Location Manager). A description of roles is available on page 6 of the [CVMS user account management user guide](#).

- Making sure everyone has an [NCID](#) (a unique identifier within the North Carolina Identity Management platform)
- Registering for an account in the [NC Vaccines Help Desk Portal](#). Explore the [NC Vaccines Help Desk Resources](#) for more information on using the NC Vaccines Help Desk Portal.
- Once all employees are aligned to a CVMS role and assigned an NCID, you can begin onboarding. Onboard staff in CVMS via self-service if a Healthcare Location Manager was submitted during enrollment. Refer to the Self-Service Bulk Upload template to onboard up to 100 users at a time. This option is most time efficient when onboarding at least 10 or more users. More information can be found here: [Health Care Provider \(HCP\) User Onboarding Process User Guide](#)

NCIR Users: Get Activated in the NCIR

Once you have determined how and to whom you wish to administer vaccines, you can begin by walking through the steps outlined in the [NCIR Provider Enrollment Roadmap](#).

Important early steps include:

- Identifying who in your clinic will serve in specific NCIR roles (e.g., Reports Only User, Typical User, Inventory Control, Administrator). A description of roles is available on the final page of the [Logging into NCIR and Common Issues User Guide](#).
- Making sure everyone has an [NCID](#) (a unique identifier within the North Carolina Identity Management platform). Refer to this [Registering with NCID User Guide](#) for more details.
- Directing questions to the NC Vaccines Help Desk at 1-877- 873-6247 to speak with a live agent or submitting a ticket through this [Immunization Inquiry webform](#).

Once all employees are aligned to an NCIR role and assigned an NCID, you can begin onboarding. Onboard staff in NCIR via self-service by an Administrator. For assistance adding new users to a practice or facility in NCIR, refer to this [Managing Users - User Guide](#).

Establish a Staffing Plan

Refine your vaccine staffing plan and develop a plan to administer vaccine. Identify roles and responsibilities for the vaccine administration process. Plan carefully to allow time for data entry into CVMS and be clear which staff member is responsible for data entry within 72 hours of vaccine administration. Review Section 16.6 of the [Provider Guidance](#) for more staffing considerations.

Train Employees on COVID-19 Vaccine & CVMS or NCIR

All employees involved in vaccine administration in any capacity at each location must be trained to use the organization's vaccine management system of choice, either NCIR or CVMS. NCIR training resources can be found on the [NCIR User Guides and Recorded Trainings](#) page on the NCDHHS website. Recorded sessions and a schedule of live CVMS trainings can be found on the [CVMS User Guides, Recorded Trainings and Upcoming Trainings](#) page on the NCDHHS website. We recommend starting with the recorded or live [CVMS Provider Portal 101](#) session and moving through additional trainings and resources from there.

Our [Provider Training Summary](#) serves as a helpful guide for navigating the variety of training that is available across vaccination roles

The designated primary and back-up vaccine coordinators at each location are **required** to review the [CDC's Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit](#), which includes the COVID-19 Vaccine Addendum, and complete the [COVID-19 Vaccine Training: General Overview of Immunization Best Practices for Healthcare Providers](#) and [CDC's You Call the Shots: Vaccine Storage and Handling](#) module. CDC also has [additional trainings](#), including COVID-19 vaccine [product specific](#) trainings and job aids that staff might find helpful.

Ensure Your Organization has Current COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Knowledge

Everyone involved in vaccine administration at your location should have an understanding of the clinical information related to the COVID-19 vaccine. Please have your staff review section 11.0 of the [Provider Guidance Document](#) for COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Information and Guidance and the [CDC's clinical care considerations for COVID-19 vaccination](#).

Emergency Use Authorization Fact Sheets

Obtain a copy of the most up-to-date [Emergency Use Authorization Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers](#) for each COVID-19 vaccine product your organization receives and establish a process to provide a printed copy of this document to each recipient prior to administration of the vaccine (both first and second dose if applicable). These Fact Sheets are similar to the Vaccine Information Statements (VIS) you provide patients when administering routine immunizations.

Staff administering COVID-19 vaccine are also required to review the [Emergency Use Authorization Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers Administering Vaccine](#) for each respective vaccine product being administered in your office.

Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting (VAERS)

The Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) is a national early warning system to detect possible safety problems with vaccine by continuously monitoring the safety of vaccines given to children and adults in the United States. There are situations where reporting to VAERS is required by the EUA for providers. Train your designated vaccine administrators on how to report an adverse event in VAERS following a COVID-19 vaccine administration. Review the following resources to learn more about VAERS:

- [CDC: Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#)
- [10 Things Healthcare Providers Need to Know about the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#)

In addition to reporting adverse clinical events that occur in vaccine recipients, CDC has also asked for COVID-19 vaccine providers to report any administration errors or injuries that occur during vaccine administration as a result of deficient supplies (e.g., syringes) from the ancillary kits that accompany federal COVID-19 vaccine orders.

Ancillary Kit Deficiency Reporting

Vaccine providers are encouraged to report any issues with equipment in the ancillary kits that are shipped with their federal vaccine orders. There are four steps to reporting to ensure enough information is gathered to ensure problem trends in packaging and shipping can be identified. This is further described in the [Provider Guidance Document](#) Section 11.10.2.

V-safe After Vaccination Health Checker

V-safe is a smartphone-based tool that uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins to vaccine recipients following COVID-19 vaccination. V-safe also provides second dose vaccine reminders, if needed. Establish a process to provide a printed copy of the V-safe Information Sheet to each recipient after administration of the COVID-19 vaccine (both first and second dose) to support adverse effect monitoring. Please review the [CDC V-safe information page](#). Modifications to the V-safe tool have been made to allow parents and guardians the ability to complete health surveys on behalf of their adolescents, describing symptoms and health events after vaccination.

Special considerations for adolescents

The EUA for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine applies to ages 12-15. For special considerations for adolescents, please review sections 5.2, 6.3, 6.5.4, 11.6. and 11.8 of the [Provider Guidance](#).

4) I'm Ready to Accept a Vaccine Allocation and Administer Vaccines. How Do I Do This? (Ordering & Administering Vaccine)

The Allocations Process

We continue to make the allocations process easier. As an enrolled and activated COVID-19 vaccine provider, you will receive any new or updated allocation information in the weekly allocation email from vaccineinfo@dhhs.nc.gov. These two resources on the NCDHHS COVID-19 Response website will always offer the latest allocations and order information:

- [COVID-19 Vaccine Allocation: Expectations and Logistics](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Ordering Guidelines](#)

Currently, providers can request the type and amount of COVID-19 vaccine they need **at any time using the always-open request form: [NCDHHS Vaccination Allocation Request Form](#)**. Providers will use this link to request one allocation amount to cover both first and second doses. Second doses will not be automatically sent and should be requested as needed.

If providers cannot store and/or administer the minimum order quantity, they may request transfers from their local hub or nearby provider. When physically transferring vaccine, you must ensure the vaccine cold-chain is being maintained. Refer to the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) Storage and Handling Toolkit](#), the [U.S. Pharmacopeia COVID-19 Vaccine Handling Toolkit: Operational Considerations for Healthcare Practitioners](#), and [CDC's product specific transport guidance \(Pfizer, Moderna, Janssen/Johnson & Johnson\)](#) for additional information on safe transport of COVID-19 vaccine.

Updated Guidance on Using Vaccines

Using every dose in a vial before it expires can be challenging in some settings. In these circumstances, getting vaccine to people who want it should be prioritized over ensuring that every dose is used in an open vial. The CDC has stated that providers should never miss an opportunity to vaccinate someone out of concern for having unused doses.

More information on allocations expectations can be found in the [Vaccine Allocations Expectations & Logistics document](#) and Section 16.1 of the [Provider Guidance](#).

Administering Vaccine in CVMS

The [Check-in Recipients and Document Vaccination user guide](#) details steps for registering recipients and booking walk-in appointments and includes other point-of-care considerations.

For individuals who have an email address, it can be linked to their CVMS Recipient Record. Email information will ultimately allow them to access their personal vaccination information in the COVID-19 Vaccine Portal. Please help us to capture this information and other personal contact details at the time of vaccination, both for newly registering recipients and for recipients already registered in the COVID-19 Vaccine Portal. Please note that although emails addresses are encouraged, not every recipient will have one and they are not required to provide one to receive a vaccine. You can find steps for both in the [Check-in Recipients and Document Vaccination user guide](#).

When it is time to administer the dose to the recipient, please reference to the [Check-in Recipients and Document Vaccination user guide](#) which details exactly how to enter vaccine administration details in the CVMS Provider Portal. At a high level, you'll want to:

- Select the proper provider location (if you are assigned to multiple locations)
- Check in the individual receiving the vaccine

- Communicate to the patient product specific information (e.g., benefits and risk) and give the individual the relevant EUA fact sheet prior to administering vaccine
- Prepare the vaccine according to manufacturer guidelines
- Administer in accordance with FDA authorization and ACIP recommendation for the vaccine product and record administration details
- Discuss second dose options with the individual if using a two-dose product and the first does was just administered and schedule a second dose appointment if applicable
- Ensure that the patient waits in a designated location for 15-30 minutes until cleared to leave
- Provide the patient with a completed COVID-19 vaccination card (these cards are included in an ancillary kit that accompanies each vaccine shipment)

Administering Vaccine in NCIR

The [Adding New Clients](#) and the [Adding and Editing New Immunizations User Guide](#) details steps for creating new patient records within the NCIR and documenting a new vaccination for a patient.

For individuals who have an email address, it can be linked to their CVMS Recipient Record. Email information will ultimately allow them to access their personal vaccination information in the COVID-19 Vaccine Portal. Please help us to capture this information and other personal contact details at the time of vaccination, both for newly registering recipients and for recipients already registered in the COVID-19 Vaccine Portal. Please note that although emails addresses are encouraged, not every recipient will have one and they are not required to provide one to receive a vaccine. You can find steps for both in the [Check-in Recipients and Document Vaccination user guide](#).

When it is time to administer the dose to the recipient, please reference the [Adding and Editing New Immunizations User Guide](#), which details exactly how to enter vaccine administration details into NCIR. At a high level, you'll want to:

- Select the proper provider location (if you are assigned to multiple locations)
- Check in the individual receiving the vaccine
- Communicate to the patient product specific information (e.g., benefits and risk) and give the individual the relevant EUA fact sheet prior to administering vaccine
- Prepare the vaccine according to manufacturer guidelines
- Administer in accordance with FDA authorization and ACIP recommendation for the vaccine product and record administration details
- Discuss second dose options with the individual if using a two-dose product and the first does was just administered and schedule a second dose appointment if applicable
- Ensure that the patient waits in a designated location for 15-30 minutes until cleared to leave
- Provide the patient with a completed COVID-19 vaccination card (these cards are included in an ancillary kit that accompanies each vaccine shipment)

5) I'm Administering Vaccine, Now What? Help Us Quickly End this Pandemic!

THANK YOU!

Staying Informed & Seeking Support

If you have any questions, we're here! You can speak with a live agent by calling the NC Vaccines Help Desk at (877) 873-6247 to support you with any questions you may encounter during vaccine management and administration. To communicate with a live agent online, you can submit an [NCIR Web Ticket](#) or a [CVMS Web Ticket](#). You may also consider seeking guidance from the Provider Help Desk Virtual Agent, available [here](#) 24/7.

To stay up to date on latest NC DHHS guidance you will receive emails from vaccineinfo@dhhs.nc.gov. Be sure to read updates thoroughly so that you are acting on the latest vaccination updates and guidance. We also ask that you **share information with your organization and team members**, so everyone stays informed of the latest COVID-19 vaccination information!

NCDHHS hosts weekly sessions for providers to catch up on important topics and ask questions. Please join whenever you schedule allows!

SESSION	DATE	TIME	ZOOM LINK	PASSCODE
Weekly Updates for Providers Option 1 <i>Audience: All Providers</i>	Wednesdays	12:30 PM-1:00 PM ET	Link Meeting ID: 161 777 2455	vaccine
Weekly Updates for Providers Option 2 <i>Audience: All Providers</i>	Wednesdays	5:00PM-5:30PM ET	Link Meeting ID: 160 227 2657	vaccine

Understand Coding and Billing

Currently, there is no cost to you for obtaining COVID-19 vaccine; the federal government is buying the vaccine and the ancillary kits needed (e.g., needles), and the federal government and NC DHHS will deliver it to your door. While Medicare, Medicaid and private insurers do not pay for the vaccine itself, they will pay an administration fee. Review [this document](#) for information on how to bill administration fees to Medicare, Medicaid, private payers in NC, and even for uninsured patients.

Tools for Vaccinating the General Public Filling Appointments

To ensure North Carolinians know you are a COVID-19 vaccine provider, make sure you are listed on the [Vaccines.gov Site Locator](#). For additional ease, consider enabling the [CVMS Scheduling feature](#) for recipients to schedule appointments and follow the link's instructions on how to use this feature.

Other Strategies for Filling Appointments

As a healthcare provider you have significant influence in creating an easy and approachable vaccine process for patients and members of the community. NCDHHS has created a handout with [strategies](#) to help you bring in recipients and fill your COVID-19 vaccination appointments. We also encourage offering walk-in appointments, if possible, at your location. NCDHHS has also created a [toolkit](#) with emails, letter, and phone call scripts for outreach to your patient population to encourage them to get vaccinated.

It's also okay to offer incentives to encourage individuals to get vaccinated. Some vaccine providers have partnered with local businesses and organizations for vaccine incentives; some [incentives](#) are also supported by NCDHHS.

Recruiting Your Patients and Reaching Historically Marginalized Populations (HMP)

Some patients may need more support to access COVID-19 vaccine, or additional outreach and education. You can leverage this [toolkit](#) to learn how you can ensure equity in your vaccination program, committing to meet the needs of historically marginalized populations.

Healthier Together Initiative

We have launched an exciting NCDHHS initiative called Healthier Together: Health Equity Action Network, also known as [Healthier Together](#). Healthier Together is a public-private partnership to increase

the number of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and from other historically marginalized populations receiving COVID-19 vaccinations across the state of North Carolina.

Please be on the lookout for Healthier Together regional field teams working in your community. They can assist in linking you with community-based organizations in your area who are trusted messengers to ensure more individuals from historically marginalized populations can get access to vaccine.

Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) Map

This [mapping tool](#) shows places in North Carolina with the highest rates of social vulnerability and lowest rates of COVID-19 vaccination. We encourage vaccine providers to use this map to determine where to conduct your outreach efforts and where to locate vaccination sites and mobile units. Vaccine providers can also see community-based organizations who have offered to help with vaccinations on this map – use the contact information listed on the map to reach out for their help.

Connecting Your EHR to CVMS

Some but not all EHRs can be linked to CVMS through the Health Information Exchange (HIE). It is possible for you to set up a secure file transfer to upload files from your EHR to the NC HIE (NC HealthConnex) to populate CVMS. This will eliminate the need for registration of patients in CVMS and reduce the need for manual re-entry of EHR documented vaccine administration data into CVMS. To enroll in CVMS Automation, please contact the connectivity team (below). We look forward to reserving your spot and receiving your files as soon as you are ready.

- Send an email to: hiea@nc.gov to begin connectivity setup, confirm data connectivity agreement status, and reserve your estimated onboarding spot

Personal Vaccination Information

When a patient requests their COVID-19 vaccination information, you (as the healthcare provider) can now use the Vaccine Information feature in CVMS to download or print the record in PDF format. For a recipient to access their own personal vaccination information without assistance from you or the NC Vaccines Help Desk, they'll need to log into the COVID-19 Vaccine Portal. As previously stated, this requires a recipient to have an email address associated with their CVMS record, so please help us in capturing this information during recipient registration.

Providers using NCIR for COVID-19 vaccine management can locate patient records within the portal and print or share with their patient through secure means.