

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
One Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02108

DATE: Friday, January 8, 2021
TO: **All home-based healthcare workers working in Massachusetts**
RE: Home-based Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Vaccine - Important Update
1/8/21

To all home-based healthcare workers working in Massachusetts:

This message is being sent on behalf of the Massachusetts COVID-19 Command Center.

As a member of the home-based healthcare worker community, you play an important role in protecting the health of some of the Commonwealth's most vulnerable residents, as well as the health of yourself, your families and communities. **You are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1 of the vaccine roll-out.** This communication is meant to provide initial information about receiving the vaccine; we will continue to reach out as additional details are available.

When will home-based healthcare workers receive vaccinations?

Vaccine distribution in Massachusetts is occurring in a phased approach. There are three phases and within each phase there are several priority groups. Phase 1 started with hospitals and nursing homes. **Home-based healthcare workers will start to receive the vaccine in the beginning of February**, and we expect to be able to make vaccines available to all home-based healthcare workers in the month of February and on a go-forward basis.

We will share information about the date when you may access vaccinations as soon as possible. Learn more about the distribution timeline [here](#).

Who is considered a home-based healthcare worker?

A clinical or non-clinical healthcare or home care worker doing **in-person consumer or patient-facing care when the work is performed in the home of the patient/healthcare consumer**.

Examples of home-based healthcare workers and organizations include, ***but are not limited to*** (***not*** in order of priority):

Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)

- Home Health, hospice and home care agency staff performing visits in the home
- Independent Nurses and Continuous Skilled Nursing staff performing visits in the home
- Aging Service agency staff performing regular visits in the home

- State Agency staff performing direct care in the home, including DCF Emergency Response Workers, DMH case managers and DDS care coordinators
- Mental and behavioral health providers providing in home treatment (e.g., ACCS integrated team, PACT, CBHI, ABA, ESP)
- Adult Foster Care and Group Adult Foster Care workers performing work in the home
- Independent Therapists (physical therapists, occupational therapists, Speech & Language therapists) performing work in the home
- Home-Based Respite and Individual/Family Support staff (DDS and DDS Self Directed)

Where can home-based healthcare workers receive vaccinations?

The Commonwealth is working to provide home-based healthcare workers with several different options for receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. These options include:

1. Mass vaccination sites will be launched by the Commonwealth in the coming weeks. Additionally, some hospitals and health care providers will offer vaccination sites. Please check back [here](#) over the coming weeks for more information about a vaccination site near you.
2. Qualifying organizations that can vaccinate may work with the Department of Public Health to provide vaccines on-site at the place of employment. Organizations that would like to vaccinate their own staff must follow the [Guide to Applying to Administer the COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

Note: *If you represent an organization that submitted an application to administer the COVID-19 vaccine but have not heard back from the Department of Public Health Vaccine Unit, please email DPH-Vaccine-Management@massmail.state.ma.us.*

Additionally, the Commonwealth is exploring more options that include retail pharmacies and pop-up clinics; more information about additional options will be coming soon. You can check back [here](#) for updates.

Note: There will be more information about what you need to bring to your vaccination appointment to show that you are a home-based healthcare worker.

How can I get more information?

1. Regularly check the [Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine](#) webpage for the latest information.
2. Expect to receive more emails like this in the coming weeks with important updates.
3. The Command Center will host a Tele-Town Hall for all home-based healthcare workers mid-January, in English with live translation to Spanish. We will send out an invitation soon.

Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Wearing masks and social distancing help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough.

Vaccines are safe and will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Getting vaccinated yourself may also protect people around you, particularly people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

It will be important to continue to wear masks at your job and in the community until enough people are vaccinated. While the vaccines have been shown to be effective in helping the person vaccinated not get ill from COVID-19, they have not yet been proven to reduce that person's ability to transmit COVID-19 to others including your patients. Until we know more, you should continue wearing masks and PPE at the same rate as you did prior to your vaccination.

Vaccines for other priority groups will become available in March, and we expect to provide vaccines to the general public in April through June. More information will come out when we can go back to "normal" and safely stop wearing masks, but vaccines will help us get there! Thank you for doing your part.

Additional resources:

- [Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Information](#)

If you have questions, please email COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-MA@mass.gov