

Trump Administration Announces Pharmacy Partnership to Provide COVID-19 Vaccine to LTC Facility Residents... When it is Available

Dateline October 16, 2020 - From the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Department of Defense (DoD):

To meet the Trump Administration's Operation Warp Speed (OWS) goals, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Department of Defense (DoD) today announced agreements with CVS and Walgreens to provide and administer COVID-19 vaccines to residents of long-term care facilities (LTCF) nationwide with no out-of-pocket costs. Protecting especially vulnerable Americans has been a critical part of the Trump Administration's work to combat COVID-19, and LTCF residents may be part of the prioritized groups for initial COVID-19 vaccination efforts until there are enough doses available for every American who wishes to be vaccinated.

The Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program provides complete management of the COVID-19 vaccination process. This means LTCF residents and staff across the country will be able to safely and efficiently get vaccinated once vaccines are available and recommended for them, if they have not been previously vaccinated. It will also minimize the burden on LTCF sites and jurisdictional health departments of vaccine handling, administration, and fulfilling reporting requirements.

"Protecting the vulnerable has been the number one priority of the Trump Administration's response to COVID-19, and that commitment will continue through distributing a safe and effective vaccine earliest to those who need it most," said HHS Secretary Alex Azar. "Our unprecedented public-private partnership with CVS and Walgreens will provide convenient and free vaccination to residents of nursing homes across America, another historic achievement in our efforts to get a safe and effective vaccine to Americans as fast as possible."

"Today's historic pharmacy partnership will truly help jurisdictions solve a logistical hurdle and decrease the burden of distributing, administering, and reporting COVID-19 vaccination for both states and long-term care facilities," said Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Robert Redfield. "CDC is proud to be a part of this public-private partnership that is advancing care for the Nation's most vulnerable."

"The pandemic has inflicted a devastating toll on America's nursing home residents," said Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Seema Verma. "That's why the Trump Administration has taken unprecedented action to protect them in every possible way. This effort will ensure they are at the front of the line for the COVID vaccine and will bring their grueling trial to a close as swiftly as possible."

"Ensuring access to COVID-19 vaccines, particularly among our most vulnerable populations, will be critical to saving lives and helping our nation recover from the pandemic," said John Standley, Walgreens president. "Since the onset of the pandemic, Walgreens has worked closely with the CDC, HHS and the Administration to help accelerate the availability of COVID tests, ensure access to essential medicines and products and serve as a safe and trusted source of

information in our communities. We are proud of how our pharmacists have continued to serve our patients and look forward to leveraging our nationwide footprint, community presence and pharmacist expertise to help administer COVID-19 vaccines, once they become available.”

“CVS Health has been on the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19, working across the health care spectrum in all the communities we serve and that will continue to be the case when we have a vaccine to dispense,” said Troy Brennan, Chief Medical Officer, CVS Health.

Starting October 19, 2020, LTCFs will be able to opt in and indicate which pharmacy partner their facility prefers to have on-site. LTCFs are not mandated to participate in this program and can request to use their current pharmacy contracts to support COVID-19 vaccination. Nursing homes can sign up via the [National Healthcare Safety Network](#) and assisted living facilities can sign up via an online survey they will receive.

To ensure success of this program, HHS and OWS will continue coordination with jurisdictions, long-term care facilities, and federal partners including the CMS, and expand engagement with professional organizations including the [Association of State and Territorial Health Officials](#), the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#), the [American Health Care Association](#) and [Leading Age](#).

Immunization with a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine is a critical component of our nation’s strategy to reduce COVID-19-related illness, hospitalizations, and deaths. Early in the COVID-19 Vaccination Program, there may be a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine, and vaccination efforts may focus on those critical to the response, those providing direct care, and those at highest risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19, including long-term care facility residents.

Currently there are no COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized or approved by the Food and Drug Administration and recommended by CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. However, the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-term Care Program is being established in anticipation that one or more COVID-19 vaccines will be available before the end of the year.

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