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TO: DDD PROVIDER NETWORK
FROM: Division of Developmental Disabilities
RE: Response to COVID-19 (rel21)
DATE: 12/31/20

COVID-19 Guidance for Alabama HCBS Waiver Service Providers
Division of Developmental Disabilities Services

In the past month, the Covid-19 Work Group has as guest Dr. Burnestine Taylor, Assistant State Health Officer, Communicable Disease, in the Department of Public Health, and Dr. Mark Woods, ADMH Health Officer in an effort to gather information for our provider network. As you might imagine, both noted how fluid the information about vaccination and the vaccination process is with updates being provided almost daily.

WHAT WE KNOW TODAY!

ADPH updated the Vaccination Allocation Plan on 12/23/20 (SEE ATTACHED). We understand our **Direct Support and Nursing staff are considered 'frontline health workers' (see attached) in Phase 1a and receive the vaccination NOW!** To receive the vaccination, workers should contact one of the 15 vaccination clinic locations ([Designated Hospitals for Pfizer Vaccinations](#)) and schedule an appointment. Upon arrival, you may be asked to provide evidence of your employment status as a frontline health worker (eg., badge or some other form of employment verification) and be required to complete a Screening Questionnaire that ask an array of questions relating to your current health status or whether you understand the information in the Vaccine Information Sheet or Fact sheet ([Pfizer-BioNTech](#)). Vaccinations are not mandatory.

Individuals served are designated in Phase 1b and will be able to access vaccinations possibly in mid-January. In the meantime, providers must begin having conversations with individuals and guardians regarding the vaccines, specifically, whether they approve of getting the vaccine. All providers must ensure that individual's health information is updated. Discuss with the individual's physician whether there are any concerns that may result in complications from the vaccine. Vaccinations are not mandatory. **LOOK FOR PHASE 1B RELEASE!**

BE INFORMED! ENSURE INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND DIRECT SUPPORT STAFF ARE INFORMED!!

[Provider Information Toolkit](#) provides information about the process required to administer the vaccines and **a list of hospitals considered to be vaccination clinics (see link below)**.

[Designated Hospitals for Pfizer Vaccinations](#) Provider network Staff should call the number provided and schedule an appointment. You are also encouraged to stay in contact with your local Public Health office.

[Understanding How COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#) To understand how the body responds to viruses and how COVID-19 Vaccines Work

[Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Currently Authorized in the United States](#) This link will provide an abundance of information relating to the vaccination of persons with underlying medical conditions and contraindications and precautions,

[WHY SHOULD YOU GET VACCINATED?](#) (poster)

Please send any questions you may have relating to COVID-19, services, etc., to:
ADMH-DDD.Questions@mh.alabama.gov

**The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
Alabama Emergency Response Technology (ALERT)
Health Alert Network (HAN)
December 31, 2020**

Obtaining COVID-19 Vaccinations

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) has received numerous calls and emails from physicians, other healthcare workers, and from the general public concerning COVID-19 vaccines and how to obtain them. As the supply of COVID-19 vaccine is limited at the moment, ADPH is following the guidance of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for prioritization of risk groups. Alabama received COVID-19 vaccine in our state on December 14, 2020. We are currently in Phase 1a, consisting of healthcare workers and residents in long-term care facilities.

ADPH has been working with several external groups including but not limited to the Medical Association of State of Alabama (MASA), the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners (ALBME), and the Alabama Hospital Association (AlaHA), the Alabama Nursing Home Association, (ANHA), the Alabama Dental Association (ALDA), the Alabama Pharmacy Association (APA), the Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AL-AAP), and the Alabama Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) to develop and disseminate information on how to access the COVID-19 vaccines.

Beginning the week of December 28, residents and employees of Long-Term Care facilities began receiving vaccination through the federal Pharmacy Partnership. Once persons in Phase 1a have been offered the vaccine, Alabama will move into Phase 1b. ADPH does not currently have a timeline as to when we will be able to move to the next Phase since this is dependent on vaccine supply. To access the Alabama COVID-19 Allocation Plan please go at <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/assets/adph-covid19-vaccination-allocation-plan.pdf>

ADPH will continue to work with others to distribute information on phases, vaccine uptake, using multiple outlets including news releases, provider notices, social media, press conferences and other coverage. The ADPH website will contain weekly updates on vaccinations given. Any news releases and notices distributed by ADPH can be accessed via Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) at <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/index.html>

ADPH would like to remind providers that ACIP recommendations include vaccinating persons with a history of COVID-19 infection since there continues to remain concerns as to the extent and length of immunity after disease. Performing antibody testing to determine “immunity” is not recommended and should not be performed to decide whether a person should or should not receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Persons with recent infection can wait to receive the vaccine for up to 90 days post symptom onset or

post first positive COVID-19 results. Waiting is not mandatory but in light of limited vaccine supply will allow persons most at risk of infection to receive vaccinations first.

We continue to see increasing COVID-19 numbers statewide. State and local public health continues to reach out to providers for information on test results but have experienced some delays and resistance in the requested information being provided. If you or your staff, receive a request for test results, medical records, from public health employees including contract employees, please comply. The current HIPAA regulations and state law citations allow for the release of this information to public health without patient consent:

Under 45 CFR 164.512(b)(1)(i) a health care provider may share a patient's PHI without the patient's consent to public health authorities that are legally authorized to receive reports for the purpose of controlling or preventing diseases.

Under 45 CFR 164.512(c)(2) a health care provider may use or disclose a patient's PHI for treatment purposes without the patient's consent.

Under Section 22-11A-2 of the Code of Alabama, certain individuals are required to report cases or suspected cases of notifiable diseases and health conditions to the Alabama Department of Public Health. These individuals include: physicians, dentists, nurses, medical examiners, hospital administrators, nursing home administrators, laboratory directors, school principals, and day care center directors.

Finally, while a number of sites are posting information on how to access vaccines, physicians and other healthcare workers included in Phase 1a can obtain COVID-19 vaccines by visiting the following link at MASA: <https://alabamamedicine.org/coronavirus/physician-resources/>

Alabama COVID-19 Vaccination Allocation Plan

Allocation Phase	Population	Definition
Phase 1	Critical healthcare workforce, residents of long-term care	
1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontline health workers, including clinical and non-clinical, in hospitals, nursing homes, or those providing in in-home or mental health care directly. Workers in other healthcare settings providing services with a risk of exposure to fluids and aerosols 	<p><u>Inpatient/Hospital Exposures:</u></p> <p>Very High-Risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those who perform aerosol-generating procedures. Frontline health workers, including clinical and non-clinical workers in hospitals, nursing homes, EMS, or those providing in-home or mental health care directly. Healthcare workers or laboratory personnel collecting or handling potential SARS-CoV-2 specimens. Residents and staff of nursing homes and long-term care facilities (*Provided by Long Term Care Pharmacy Program) Pathologists performing autopsies on persons known or suspected to have had SARS-CoV-2 at the time of death. <p>High-Risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other health care workers who perform activities, such as transportation or environmental services who risk exposure to bodily fluids or aerosols. Other essential personnel with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of SARS-CoV-2 such as mortuary services Persons providing direct patient care <p>Medium Risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons working in critical healthcare services who have direct contact with the general public, such as pharmacists. Others with outpatient exposure risks such as non-hospital based physicians, nurse practitioners, dentists, laboratorians, other providers and ancillary support staff in

Updated 12-23-20

Note: This document is a draft and will be updated as additional guidance from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is available.



		additional settings private offices, Federally Qualified Health Centers, County Health Departments, subspecialties, mental health and treatment centers
1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essential workers at highest risk for work related exposure Persons in identified age groups at risk for COVID 19 associated morbidity and mortality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons age ≥ 75 years Frontline essential workers (FOOTNOTE 1) Living in congregate settings including but not limited to homeless shelters, group homes, prisons, or jail. First responders including firefighters and law enforcement.
1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons in identified age groups at risk for COVID 19 associated morbidity and mortality not included in Phase 1 b Persons with high risk medical conditions Essential workers not recommended for vaccination in Phase 1b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons age 65-74 years Persons age 16-64 years with high risk medical conditions (FOOTNOTE 2) Additional essential workers (FOOTNOTE 3)
Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All persons in age groups not previously recommended for vaccine General Population not included in earlier phases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persons not identified in Phase 1 a, Phase 1b, or Phase 1c including persons age 18 and above. Young adults between ages of 18 and 30 with typically broader social networks, increasing their risk of infection and transmission, but with less likelihood of becoming severely ill or dying due to COVID-19. Persons not required to have contact with potential sources of COVID-19. Persons not required to have contact with the general public.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office workers who do not have frequent close contact with coworkers, customers, or the public. • Manufacturing and industrial facility workers who do not have frequent close contact with coworkers, customers, or the public. • Healthcare workers providing only telemedicine. • Long-distance truck drivers. • Persons who telework. • Broad immunization of children and those who are pregnant (who choose not to take vaccine as part of Phase 1 c) will depend on whether COVID-19 vaccines have been adequately tested for safety and efficacy in these groups.
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FOOTNOTES

1: Defined by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security-First responders (firefighters and police officers) corrections officers, Food and agriculture workers, U.S. Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, and those who work in the education sector (teachers, support staff members) as well as child care workers.

2: High risk medical conditions Cancer, Chronic Kidney Disease, COPD, Heart Conditions such as heart failure, coronary artery disease or cardiomyopathies, immunocompromised state, solid organ transplant, obesity BM>30 kg/m2, severe obesity BMI> 40 kg/m2, sickle cell disease, smoking, type 2 diabetes, pregnancy.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html

3: Transportation and logistics, waste and wastewater, food service, shelter and housing, (e.g. construction), finance (e.g. bank tellers), information technology and communication, energy, legal, media, public safety (e.g. engineers), and public health workers.

REFERENCES

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6949e1.htm?s_cid=mm6949e1_w

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm695152e2.htm?s_cid=mm695152e2_w

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