

COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAM PLANNING

A Checklist for State and Territorial Health Officials

With Operation Warp Speed's aim to 'deliver 300 million doses of a safe, effective vaccine for COVID-19 by January 2021,' it is only prudent that health departments begin to take steps now to facilitate a successful rollout. These steps will build on established federal and state pandemic vaccination plans, and the lessons learned during the 2009-2010 H1N1 influenza pandemic, with the understanding that the requirements for a COVID-19 vaccine will evolve over time. Specific planning assumptions and details guiding this national effort should be known shortly. Meanwhile, the steps below provide a checklist that state and territorial health officials can begin following now to prepare.

1 Establish Baseline Knowledge

- ✓ Review Pandemic Vaccination Plans
 - Identify strengths and gaps in your current plans.

Set up a meeting with your Immunization and Public Health Preparedness programs to:

- ✓ Discuss the routine vaccine distribution processes within the state/territory.
- ✓ Discuss emergency medical countermeasure plans including receipt, storage, and staging of vaccinations.
- ✓ Identify gaps in preparedness plans.
- ✓ Examine major challenges of the immunization program.
- ✓ Review current operations of the immunization information system (IIS).
- ✓ Consider program staffing needs.
- ✓ Establish a mutual understanding of expectations and assumptions for a pandemic vaccination program.

2 Formalize a Vaccine Approach

- ✓ Be prepared to immediately discuss and solidify vaccine delivery plans based on forthcoming HHS/CDC prioritization guidance and revise your state pandemic plans as necessary. Since vaccine supplies will likely be limited initially, clarify ethical principles for vaccine distribution and determine which providers should be considered to receive early supply of doses. Vaccines approved for use under federal emergency use authorization (EUA) will be subject to additional federal regulations.
- ✓ Formalize plans to administer initial doses of the vaccine to frontline healthcare workers who are evaluating and caring for persons with COVID-19. Ensure relationships and plans are in place to target vaccination efforts to critical occupation groups.
- ✓ Talk to other states, especially bordering states, about discrepancies in vaccine implementation and prioritization strategies; it's critical to harmonize plans with each other and with CDC guidance whenever possible. It will also be important to explain differences in state implementation plans to the public.
- ✓ Work with your public information office to develop a communications plan that includes general information about the vaccine and specific information about vaccination sites.

3 Enhance the Immunization Information System (IIS)

- ✓ Decide on the type and frequency of vaccine administration information that is feasible and/or required.
- ✓ Support enhancement of the IIS to document and report vaccination efforts. If upgrades are needed, work with programs to establish the vendor timeline and estimated costs.

4 Reach Out to Partners

- ✓ Help programs conduct outreach to new immunizing providers who treat persons at high risk for severe COVID-19 outcomes and critical occupational groups (e.g., safety, emergency, and essential service workers, which may include supermarket workers, delivery drivers, and others). Bolster their efforts to ensure all new providers are enrolled and trained to use the IIS and have received any necessary training on vaccine storage and handling.
- ✓ Examine state vaccinator licensing requirements and understand the regulatory process to allow for additional vaccinators as needed (e.g., pharmacists, EMS personnel, etc.).
- ✓ Encourage programs to establish regular communication channels to all interested vaccination providers (e.g., the IIS may be one way to disseminate a regular newsletter).
- ✓ Coordinate with emergency management agencies on any additional materials, vaccination sites, or communication messages needed.

5 When Ready, Test the Plan

- ✓ Perform a mass vaccination exercise simulating early scarcity scenarios (e.g., vaccination for high-priority recipients only) and later adequate supply scenarios (widespread vaccination of the public). Include running mock reports of data. Review lessons learned and revise plans. Include key vaccination partners to assist in your efforts.
- ✓ Refine reporting requirements and report templates.