



December 14, 2020

**ILLINOIS HEALTH AND HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Chief Executive Officers, Member Hospitals and Health Systems
Chief Operating Officers
Chief Medical Officers
Chief Nursing Officers
Chief Quality Officers
Chief Financial Officers
Emergency Preparedness Contacts
Emergency Department Directors
Behavioral Constituency Section
Government Relations Personnel
In-House Counsel
Public Relations Directors

FROM: A.J. Wilhelmi, President & CEO
Tim Nuding, Senior Vice President, Member Services & Corporate Finance
Keneatha Johnson, Director, Quality, Safety and Health Policy

SUBJECT: Update on Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine

On Friday and Saturday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approved the recommendations of their key advisory committees on an Emergency Use Authorization and the initial priority allocation of the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. On Sunday, Pfizer began distributing the vaccine to states across the country, including Illinois. The FDA, CDC, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) have issued numerous guidance documents and other information over the weekend. IHA wants to ensure you are aware of the distributed materials.

IDPH

IDPH is responsible for overseeing the distribution and allocation of the vaccine in EMS Regions 1-10 outside the city of Chicago, while CDPH is responsible for EMS Region 11/Chicago.

On Friday, IDPH held a webinar, specifically for hospitals, on the state’s mass vaccination plan and answered questions from hospital staff. Following is a link to a one hour recording of that webinar and some answers provided by IDPH to some key questions that arose during the webinar.

Link to a recording of IDPH’s Friday (December 11) Mass Vaccination Webinar:
<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/lr.php?RCID=a87e6065d6ca45fc28491c3e9e4df7>

IDPH written answers to select webinar questions:

1. **“EMS is included in Phase 1a, however, week 1 allocation in Illinois is for hospitals. Can hospitals vaccinate EMS as part of the first week’s allocation?”** Yes. The allocation must go to the hospital and the vaccine be administered in a hospital setting. EMS staff **are** eligible to be vaccinated in the first week's allocation, subject to availability of doses and sub-prioritization within the facility.
2. **“Can Pfizer vaccine be kept in a vaccine freezer?”** No. The Pfizer vaccine can only be kept in: 1. Ultra-Cold Freezer (-80c to -60c) for up to 6 months, 2. Pfizer Ultra Cold Shipper “Thermal Shipper” (-90c to -60C) for up to 30 days, being refilled with dry ice every 5 days, 3. Refrigerated at 2c to 8c, for up to 120 hours or 5 days.
3. **“If we have vaccine that will be wasted, but we have no more staff in Phase 1a, can we give it to the next priority population in order not to waste vaccine?”** It is important when you receive your allocation, that you are certain you can utilize it within the time frame. You should also be planning now and identifying staff to be vaccinated. However, if you end up with more vaccine than the phase you are currently in, in order not to waste the vaccine, you can vaccinate people in the next phase. It is extremely important not to waste any doses of vaccine. Please make sure to plan ahead to identify all those who will be receiving vaccine ahead of time to ensure you are covering your Phase 1a population. If you vaccinate individuals in the next phase, please ensure you notify your ERC.

Following are links to relevant information regarding the Pfizer vaccine and the mass vaccination process:

Pfizer Fact Sheet for Recipients & Caregivers:

<https://selfservehosteu.pfizer.com/pfrrdownload/file/fid/77051>

Pfizer Fact Sheet for Vaccination Providers:

<https://selfservehosteu.pfizer.com/pfrrdownload/file/fid/77056> (Thawing/preparation information in this document)

Updated CDC Vaccine Storage & Handling Toolkit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf>

Updated CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/health-systems-communication-toolkit.html>

CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook (go to page 30):

https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/imz-managers/downloads/COVID-19-Vaccination-Program-Interim_Playbook.pdf#page=30

FDA Press Release: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-takes-key-action-fight-against-covid-19-issuing-emergency-use-authorization-first-covid-19>

Documents:

1. [Shipping, Handling & Storage Overview](#)
2. [Refrigerator Storage](#)
3. [Checklist](#)
4. [Pfizer Redistribution Considerations](#)
5. [Thermal Shipper Unpacking and Re-icing \(Dry Ice\)](#)

6. *Training & Education Series (Training for Clinicians & providers)*
7. *ACIP Interim Recommendation*

IDPH has also posted a COVID-19 Vaccine *FAQ* on its *website*.

CDPH

CDPH issued an alert on its Health Alert Network (HAN). The alert included the following key information and action items:

Summary and Action Items

- CDPH expects to receive a limited supply of vaccine within the next 1-2 weeks.
- Over the next 2 weeks, distribution will occur to hospitals with capacity for ultra-cold storage, and local pharmacies federally contracted to vaccinate long-term care facility residents and staff.
- Ensure that your healthcare system vaccine liaisons are on-call to receive vaccine as well as updated resources over time. Check www.chicagohan.org/covidvax for updates.
- CDPH summarized considerations for sub-prioritization of healthcare personnel based on risk of exposure and risk of severe COVID-19 disease in a *Health Alert released November 25, 2020*.

CDPH included the following documents in its alert:

URGENT COVID-19 Vaccine Update

Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers

Fact Sheet for Healthcare Providers

For assistance or questions, please contact the HAN Helpdesk at (312) 747-8789 or hanhelpdesk@cityofchicago.org

CDC COCA Call on COVID-19 Vaccine Safety

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will hold a Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Call, "*What Every Clinician Should Know about COVID-19 Vaccine Safety*", on Monday, December 14 at 12 p.m. CT.

During this call, clinicians will learn how they can educate their patients on what to expect after COVID-19 vaccination. In addition, they will learn how they can play an important role in monitoring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines, including encouraging patients to enroll in v-safe - a new smartphone-based, after-vaccination health checker for people who receive COVID-19 vaccines - and to use v-safe to report how they're feeling. Clinicians also will learn how to report adverse events (possible side effects) to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS).

Click on the Zoom link to join the call: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1611264903>

OR iPhone one-tap: +16692545252,,1611264903# or +16468287666,,1611264903#

OR Telephone: +1 669 254 5252 or +1 646 828 7666

Webinar ID: 161 126 4903

A recording of this call will be available for viewing on the *COCA Call webpage* a few hours after the live event ends. The slide set will be available under "Call Materials" on the *COCA Call webpage*.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Tim Nuding, Senior Vice President, Member Services and Corporate Finance at 217-541-1164 or tnuding@team-iha.org.