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To: Wisconsin Pediatricians

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## COVID-19 Vaccination for Wisconsin's Youngest Children

### PLEASE DISTRIBUTE WIDELY

#### Summary

Thank you for your ongoing work in supporting COVID-19 vaccinations as an essential part of keeping Wisconsin children and their families healthy. Your recommendations make a significant difference to patients and those in your community. Research has consistently shown that a person's physician or health care provider is the most trusted source for information on the COVID-19 vaccine and parents feel most comfortable having their child vaccinated in a healthcare setting.

**Please help us to improve the health of Wisconsin's youngest children through your continued dedication to recommending and administering the COVID-19 vaccine.**

#### Background

##### **DHS is actively planning for the vaccination of Wisconsin's youngest children**

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is planning for the rollout of the new Moderna (blue cap) vaccine for children 6 months through 5 years of age and/or the Pfizer (maroon cap) for children 6 months through 4 years of age. DHS expects this effort to include many collaborative partners throughout the state.

##### **We need your help in removing barriers to vaccinating our youngest children**

Physicians, physician assistants, and nurses continue to do excellent work and play an important role in vaccinating patients against COVID-19. However, with the recent approval of COVID-19 vaccines for children under 5, there are additional barriers that may prevent many families from accessing the vaccine.

We encourage you and your medical team to expand their reach beyond your patient base, when possible, to help vaccinate Wisconsin's youngest children that may not have a health care provider and/or regular access to health care. If you are unable to provide the vaccine on-site and need to refer patients between the ages of 6 months and 3 years to a local pharmacy, please provide them with a prescription to assist them.

## Recommendations

### **We are asking physicians and health care systems to play an even larger role.**

Rolling out COVID-19 vaccines for children under age 5 will be different than what has occurred with other age groups. Unlike prior age groups, many of the youngest children may not be able to receive vaccines in pharmacies. We will need your help to get this new age group vaccinated. And we ask that health care systems make these new vaccines accessible at as many locations and points of care as possible.

### **Guidelines and other factors will make pharmacies less accessible.**

Wisconsin allows pharmacists to administer vaccines to children under the age of 6 if all of the following apply:

- The vaccine is administered pursuant to a prescription order issued within the 29 days immediately preceding the day on which the vaccine is administered.
- The pharmacist has successfully completed a course of instruction approved by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education or the board that includes the administration of vaccines to children under the age of 6.

In addition, the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services issued a Declaration under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act in 2020 that granted permission for pharmacists to vaccinate children ages 3 and up for COVID-19.

Still, with these guidelines and other potential obstacles, pharmacies may decide not to administer the COVID-19 vaccines to our youngest children. It will depend on many factors including the comfort level of their staff, corporate rules, and whether they have the setup space for younger children. And it can take more time and is more complex for pharmacies to work with very young children.

### **Parents will look to physicians to get their youngest children vaccinated.**

With limited pharmacy vaccination options and the trust parents have in physicians; we are expecting they will depend on you and your medical team more than ever to get their youngest children vaccinated. We know you will answer the call and be there to support Wisconsin families in accessing COVID-19 vaccines and in the critically important effort to ensure children receive all recommended childhood vaccinations.

## Resources

DHS has guidance and resources for partners in a variety of health care settings on the DHS webpage [COVID-19: Guidance for Health Care Partners](#). Health care providers should sign also up for the [Health Alert Network \(HAN\)](#) to receive email notices on COVID-19 as the situation continues to evolve. By signing up for HAN, you will also receive invitations to the DHS monthly Health Care Provider Webinars.

We appreciate all the work that you do. Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to keeping Wisconsinites safe during this time.

If you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact the Wisconsin Department of Health Services at [dhscovidvaccinator@dhs.wi.gov](mailto:dhscovidvaccinator@dhs.wi.gov).

## Wisconsin Chapter