

## COVID-19: Increasing Vaccination in Primary Care Settings

Health care professionals have played a key vaccination role throughout the pandemic. As vaccine demand decreases and the ability to reach individuals changes, health care professionals should take steps now to provide more vaccinations in primary care settings. Primary care settings, including pediatric settings, are trusted resources for patients and parents. By integrating COVID-19 vaccination into primary care settings, it both normalizes the vaccine and creates a personal space where patients can openly discuss concerns with their most trusted source of health care information. This strategy is critical to bringing vaccine to where people are in spaces they know and not letting a single opportunity to vaccinate pass.

### How to Bring Vaccine to Primary Care Settings

If your primary care location is not yet a vaccinator, below are a few ways to become a vaccinator depending on your association with a hospital system and their vaccination status.

#### Primary Care Location is Part of a Hospital System that is Already an Approved Vaccinator

If your location is part of a hospital system that is already an approved vaccinator, you will have to register your location by submitting a Form B. This process consists of:

- Discussing location enrollment with your organization's COVID-19 Coordinator.
- Retrieving a Form B by logging into the [COVID-19 vaccine enrollment tool](#). (If you do not have a DOA/Wisconsin Logon, please register here)
- Completing and submitting your Form B, which will include listing your organization's reference number.
- Responding to questions about your submission as you go through the approval process.

#### Primary Care Location is a Private Practice Not Yet Vaccinating

If your location is a private practice not yet vaccinating, you will have to register to become an approved provider. This process consists of:

- Logging into the [COVID-19 vaccine enrollment tool](#).
- Generating your forms.
- Completing and submitting all your forms.
- Responding to questions about your submissions as you go through the approval process.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is available to help every step of the way by emailing [DHSCOVIDVaccinator@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSCOVIDVaccinator@dhs.wisconsin.gov). Once your forms are completed, your staff will have to complete a series of trainings. You can view a detailed list of steps, frequently asked questions, and find more information about the enrollment process on the [COVID-19 vaccinator enrollment](#) webpage.

## Tips for Having Vaccine Availability Across Sites

Consider the following tips for organizations, such as hospital systems, who may offer primary care services across a number of sites.

- Create space for COVID-19 vaccine storage in every building.  
[COVID-19 Vaccine Quick Reference Guide for Healthcare Professionals](#)
- Identify an individual and a back-up in every building to handle COVID-19 vaccine administration, organization, and data entry (For example, a COVID-19 vaccine lead). This reduces the need to train and equip multiple staff, and centralizes reporting.
- Ask every patient if they have received, or would like to receive, the COVID-19 vaccine. If yes, contact the COVID-19 vaccine lead to either bring the vaccine to the patient, or escort the patient to the vaccination area in the building.
- Create a system, such as an alert, by which staff in a specific building are notified when a vial is opened, to encourage the identification of patients to be vaccinated with said vial.
- If there are multiple specialties in a building, create friendly competition based on which specialty can vaccinate more people.
- Include a prompt in your EHR/EMR for the primary provider to have a conversation with those who are unvaccinated.
- Create an environment where COVID-19 vaccine is viewed as normal or routine; hang posters, include information on your website or in the waiting or exam rooms.
- Educate every staff member on how to encourage vaccination. Everyone from the front desk, to the rooming nurse, to the laboratory techs should become vaccine champions with the patients they encounter.
- Run reports from your EMR/EHR or WIR to identify which of your clients still need the COVID-19 vaccine or need to complete the vaccine series and assign staff to call/outreach and set up appointments.

## How Vaccinators Order Vaccine

Wisconsin COVID-19 vaccinators order Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine using the [Wisconsin Immunization Registry](#) (WIR). New vaccinators who do not have WIR access will be set up during the COVID-19 registration process. WIR training is required as a part of setup. Depending on the size of an order, orders placed in WIR will either be delivered by the manufacturer or by one of our state hubs.

Johnson & Johnson vaccine is currently on backorder and only available through redistribution between vaccinators on the [Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccine Exchange](#). The Wisconsin COVID-19 Vaccine Exchange is an online tool that helps Wisconsin vaccinators receive and redistribute vaccine with each other.

For more information and step-by-step instructions on ordering vaccines in WIR, visit the DHS [COVID-19: General Guidance for Vaccinators](#) webpage.

## Vaccine Wastage

DHS understands that there will be operational implications, such as wastage, for primary care health care professionals offering COVID-19 vaccine as part of their routine care. While it is



essential that vaccinators across the state continue to be good stewards of public resources and leverage every dose to the fullest, the goal of getting vaccine into the arm of any willing, present individual must take precedence. The ultimate goal at this point is “no missed opportunity,” rather than “no wasted doses.”

### **Your Recommendation Has an Impact**

Whether you offer vaccination in your primary care office or not, all health care professionals can be influential in increasing vaccination across the state. As people’s most trusted source of vaccine information, health care professionals play an important role in helping individuals understand the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and assuring them that COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.

Your strong recommendation and conversations with vaccine hesitant individuals are critical for vaccine acceptance. Please let your patients know who have not been vaccinated how important COVID-19 vaccines are to protecting their health.

Remind individuals of the benefits of a COVID-19 vaccination, like feeling confident that you are protecting yourself and others you care about, often not having to do regular testing in many environments (work, camps, schools, sports, etc.), and not being at risk of missing out on the things you love because you get sick or have to quarantine when exposed.

Provide patients with written information about the COVID-19 vaccine to take home.

Even if you are not administering COVID-19 vaccines, you can help people feel confident in choosing to get vaccinated against COVID-19 by addressing their questions and assuring them of the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines. Use [DHS](#) or [CDC resources](#) to assist with addressing patients’ concerns. DHS also provides training for organizations, groups, or interested parties around key vaccine messaging and how to talk to individuals who are vaccine hesitant. This presentation can be tailored to your organization or group to best reach the individuals you serve. Please email [dhscovidvaccinator@wi.gov](mailto:dhscovidvaccinator@wi.gov) for more information.

If you have questions, please email [DHSCOVIDVaccinator@dhs.wisconsin.gov](mailto:DHSCOVIDVaccinator@dhs.wisconsin.gov).