



For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

The Arc of Massachusetts
217 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453-2710
781.891.6270
arcmass@arcmass.org
www.arcmass.org

Achieve with us.

Scott Borchardt
President

Leo V. Sarkissian
Executive Director

Massachusetts Update for Congregate Homes & General Vaccine Update 2021/01/05

As many of you know may know by now many residential providers (congregate homes in DDS) have been provided appointments for vaccinations for individuals with disabilities and staff. This update is a snapshot for what to expect. We thank the Dept of Developmental Services for the information. Please note some of this information will change as the vaccination process evolves.

Two important things to keep in mind (and see a few printed snapshots from media later in this update which drives home the context):

1. The federal roll-out is basically delivery of vaccines to states and a federal partnership with pharmacies which partially addresses implementation-no other resources or funding provided
2. States must develop their own implementation process for all their citizens, and officials are updating as they go along given these realities
 - a. Pharmacies and other entities may be bringing on staff
 - b. Requirements for making sure the vaccine is properly stored
 - c. Addressing the span between booster and 2nd shot, importance of coordinating that accurately
 - d. There is an existing capacity issue in delivering the vaccine – human capacity and settings
3. We want to see all persons with disabilities have earlier access to the vaccine including those in congregate day settings – the staff in those settings also qualify as essential health care staff.

Congregate Homes

1. Information shared with providers last week related to the federal plan with the national -this covered 20% of DDS entities (there are other agencies with congregate homes); Some providers were NOT listed on these federal forms while others were only partially matched; there are over 2,000 DDS funded congregate homes
2. State level alternatives –
 - a. For those congregate care settings not matched with CVS or Walgreens (80% of remaining), alternative methods of distribution must be pursued. Guidance *will be released later this week* for congregate care.

The Arc in Massachusetts Includes the Following Local Chapters:

Berkshire County • Bristol County • Brockton Area • CCI/LowerCape • Center of Hope Foundation • Charles River Center
Communitas, Inc. • Greater Haverhill-Newburyport • incompass • Minute Man AHS • Northeast • Opportunities for Inclusion
The Arc of Opportunity • Plymouth/UpperCape • South Norfolk County • South Shore • The United Arc

- b. Congregate home providers should try to leverage their relationship with CVS or Walgreens to include your other sites either by transporting individuals or some other strategy
- c. If they aren't matched, providers should try to utilize an existing relationship with a pharmacy or hospital or community health center or medical center to provide and administer the vaccine
- d. Providers can sign up on the *state's MIIS* – to administer the vaccine themselves – they need to have someone to write the 'standing order' for the vaccine (MD or NP), and they need to have either nurses or qualified vaccine administrators; larger residential agencies may find this the most time effective.
- e. There will be large vaccination sites as in the past with the testing -at outdoor settings but these may not be practical for many constituents
- f. Mobile alternatives are being pursued

Others not in Congregate homes

We continue to advocate with partners – two letters have been sent regarding the need to target a wider group of persons with disabilities including congregate day settings.

Advocacy Recommendation for individuals NOT covered in congregate settings: We believe that many of our constituents can move further up in the line following Gov. Baker's Jan 4 announcement: moving up "residents with two or more chronic health conditions, in the second phase of inoculations slated to begin in February".

Advocate with your PCP or health care settings offering the vaccine to get the shot based on the prioritization. If you have a chronic medical health condition, include the intellectual, developmental or other disability as a second chronic condition to qualify for earlier vaccination.

Articles regarding the vaccine rollout across the nation and Europe

January 3: The U.S. vaccine rollout is [picking up speed](#) after a slow start and could be fully on track within a week or so, said Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert.

January 4: Only about 35% of the COVID-19 vaccine doses that have arrived in California have been administered so far, a rate Gov. Gavin Newsom acknowledged Monday was "not good enough" as he pledged new funding and efforts aimed at ramping up [the rollout](#).

Jan 4: Vaccinations programs in the 27 nation-bloc have gotten off to a slow start and some EU members have been quick to blame the EU's executive arm for a perceived failure of delivering the right amount of doses.

January 4, Globe/Gov. Baker: Shots for more than 45,000 first responders, such as police, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians, will start next Monday at sites across the state, including four regional vaccination hubs that later could be used to vaccinate others, Baker said.

And in a change from priorities outlined last month, the governor said he'll adopt a proposal from his COVID-19 advisory panel to move state residents age 75 and over – a population deemed to be at higher risk for coronavirus – to the front of the vaccine line, along with residents with two or more chronic health conditions, in the second phase of inoculations slated to begin in February.

Updated December 2020: Most states are NOT ready to deliver the vaccine -- “Needing to use 1,000 doses within a few days may be fine for large hospital systems or mass vaccination centers. But it could rule out sending the vaccine to providers who don’t treat that many people, even doctors’ offices in cities. It’s especially challenging in smaller towns, rural areas and Native communities on reservations that are likely to struggle to administer that many doses quickly or to maintain them at ultracold temperatures.”

References

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-01-03/fauci-says-u-s-covid-vaccine-pace-picking-up-after-slow-start>

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-01-04/newsom-california-covid-vaccine-rollout-too-slow>

<https://apnews.com/article/international-news-europe-coronavirus-pandemic-coronavirus-vaccine-1ba764a28abe11ed369d5cbb95b615eb>

<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/01/04/metro/massachusetts-ramping-up-vaccine-drive-after-what-governor-calls-rollout-with-bumps/>

<https://www.propublica.org/article/most-states-arent-ready-to-distribute-the-leading-covid-19-vaccine>