

## Talking Points: Working with Members Who Express Concerns About the COVID-19 Vaccine

CTBHP has developed guidance below to follow when speaking with members who may be hesitant to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

1. **Listen.** Don't jump in with facts right away. Hear what they are saying. If necessary, ask open-ended questions to get their thoughts and reflect back what you hear. Fears may be due to several factors, such as:
  - Misinformation obtained from social media or other sources
  - Fear of inadequate trials due to the speed of rollout
  - Historical distrust of vaccinations in some marginalized communities.
2. **Affirm their feelings.** Practice empathy. Acknowledge that their concerns are valid based on their own life experiences before jumping too quickly to providing education. (e.g. "You've been seeing a lot of concerning posts on Facebook, no wonder you feel worried.")
3. **Explore the impact of COVID-19 on their life.** Ask questions, such as "Are you experiencing any challenges with food insecurities, accessing behavioral health or physical health appointments?" "Has anyone in your family been recently diagnosed with Covid?"
4. **Provide education.** Ask permission to offer information. (e.g. "I can hear that you are concerned that the vaccine will make you sick. That's perfectly understandable. May I share some information that might ease your concerns?")

Familiarize yourself in advance with the information available on the following sites:

- State of Connecticut Department of Health website (<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus>) CT Statewide roll out plan, including phases <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/covid-19%20vaccinations>
- CDC website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>) so you share relevant information that addresses the member's specific concern. The website is updated frequently and contains such information as:
  - Facts about COVID-19 vaccines and how they work (including a plain language [Fact Sheet](#) available in English and Spanish)
  - Benefits of getting vaccinated
  - What to expect at the vaccine appointment and other FAQs
- Be honest about what is known and not yet known about the vaccines. CDC guidelines are followed, standard precautions are taken, and individuals are monitored after the vaccine is administered, as with all vaccines.
- Beacon Health Options article: *A COVID-19 vaccine: It's about more than physical health:* [Click Here for full article.](#)

- After sharing information, elicit feedback. (e.g. “How does this impact your decision?” “What else would be helpful for you to know that would help you make your decision?”)

5. **Redirect them back to medical professionals.** If they continue to have concerns, encourage them to follow up with their PCP or other medical specialist they trust. Staff may offer to call the medical provider with the member.
6. **Help to manage expectations.**
  - Because the supply of vaccine is limited, the CDC has [recommendations](#) for who should be vaccinated first. Make sure the member understands where they would fall in the phased rollout. State websites may have more specific guidance around estimated timeframes for when different groups can expect to receive a vaccine.
  - Even after receiving a vaccine, members will still need to take precautions to wear a mask, wash hands often, and remain socially distant from others not in their households to protect themselves and others since not everyone is able to get vaccinated right away. How prepared are they to practice caution before and after receiving a vaccine?

7. **How to Call to Schedule an Appointment**

**Electronic vaccine scheduling through VAMS** (Vaccine Administration Management System):

[https://link.zixcentral.com/u/ccf67b34/LO8QHKtg6xGp6ZDO8I9C\\_g?u=https%3A%2F%2Fdphsubmissions.ct.gov%2Fonlinevaccine](https://link.zixcentral.com/u/ccf67b34/LO8QHKtg6xGp6ZDO8I9C_g?u=https%3A%2F%2Fdphsubmissions.ct.gov%2Fonlinevaccine)

**Vaccine Appointment Assistance Line: (877)-918-2224** (run by United Way of CT)

If the member is attributed to a PCP affiliated with Hartford Healthcare, UCONN or Yale New Haven Health Care they can schedule a vaccine as listed below:

- Hartford Health Care: schedule your vaccine via **MyChartPlus** or call (833) -943-5721
- Yale New Haven Health: schedule your vaccine via **MyChart**