COVID-19
BEST PRACTICES △ CPESN®

covidbestpractices.com/vaccines | #COVIDRx | CDC@cpesn.com

COVID-19 Vaccine Change Package
December 2020
Track 2 for Flip the Pharmacy's Immunization Progression

NOTE: As events are moving quickly and details are changing, CPESN USA encourages you to follow events by tracking the information provided by the CDC. Click **HERE** to view. CPESN USA will provide information as it is received through future Change Packages. Please be advised that there may be delays in disseminating updates.

Change Package Overview
What is a Change Package and How Does it Apply to COVID-19 Vaccines?

A Change Package is a detailed set of step-by-step instructions and best practices to help your pharmacy transform.

CPESN® USA will be sharing at least two change packages between December and January to help pharmacies meet the requirements of the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program.

■ **KEEP IN MIND:** These Change Packages are developed based on the CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Pharmacy Agreement that CPESN Pharmacies have signed with CPESN USA. However, the content within the Change Packages may be utilized by any pharmacy to assist the pharmacy in meeting similar requirements, no matter which Network Administrator or Federal Pharmacy Partner a pharmacy chooses.

The first COVID-19 Vaccine Change Package is focused on building the infrastructure to offer the COVID-19 Vaccines at the pharmacy and to begin providing educational resources.

PLEASE NOTE ▶ Based on information gleaned from the CDC and public media, community pharmacies (namely CPESN Pharmacies that selected CPESN USA as their Federal Pharmacy Partner or Network Administrator), should plan to have the necessary infrastructure and requirements to offer COVID-19 Vaccines as early as late January.

■ Late Winter or early Spring of 2021 is when community pharmacies are expected to be involved in the Phase 2 and Phase 3 roll-out.

Goals of this COVID-19 Vaccine Change Package:
☐ **Prepare a community pharmacy to meet the requirements** set forth by the Pharmacy Agreement for the CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Program.
☐ **Become comfortable and confident in the CDC's COVID-19 Vaccination Program**, which is a major public health initiative opportunity for community pharmacy that will assist in getting our country back to normal.

What is CPESN USA and Flip the Pharmacy?

CPESN USA is a clinically integrated, nationwide organization of local networks designed to have a national presence and economy of scale for clinically integrated activities such as best practices and shared quality reporting. Its goal is to be transparent and take direction from its networks and participating pharmacies through provider run governance. For more information about CPESN USA, visit **www.cpesn.com**

Flip the Pharmacy is a national pharmacy practice transformation effort funded by the Community Pharmacy Foundation and administered by CPESN USA. Flip the Pharmacy recently announced that it would be focusing its resources and efforts to help pharmacies improve their vaccine workflows. These resources, including this change package, will be made publicly available to any and all pharmacies that are preparing to administer COVID vaccines. Pharmacies can visit **www.flipthepharmacy.com** to learn more.

This **ICON** is intended for CPESN Pharmacies that have selected CPESN USA as their Federal Pharmacy Partner (Network Administrator) for the CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Program.

NOTE: When you see this ICON, the information that follows is a **requirement**. If there is a link associated with this ICON in this Change Package or other Change Packages, please download the document and file in a folder on your computer so you can access it when CPESN USA provides more direction about the document.

This **ICON** is intended for all Pharmacies.

When you see this ICON, the information that follows is a generalized suggestion and/or there is additional information available on the subject.

To learn more visit:
www.covidbestpractices.com/vaccines

This Change Package should be reviewed by each pharmacy staff member involved with the CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Program. The **Primary Vaccine Coordinator** may help to distill the information for the pharmacy staff. *See Pages 5 and 6 for more information.*

The information provided on *www.COVIDbestpractices.com* is subject to local, state, and federal laws and regulations. As you are aware, such laws, regulations, best practices, and guidance continue to evolve during this crisis. To the extent changes occur, CPESN USA will endeavor to continue to update this website and materials to reflect the most current guidance. Nonetheless, all materials are intended to be for informational purposes and are not a substitute for your professional judgment.

Overview of the Pharmacy Staff Roles within the COVID-19 Vaccine Program:

Vaccine Coordinator (Primary and Secondary)

- The primary and secondary vaccine coordinators are listed on the CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Pharmacy Agreement that was completed for CPESN USA.

- The Primary Vaccine Coordinator may be the Pharmacy's Champion for implementing services.
  - This person may be a pharmacist, pharmacy technician, or other individual on staff at the pharmacy.

- An overview of responsibilities for the Primary Vaccine Coordinator
  - Ordering vaccines
  - Overseeing proper receipt and storage of vaccine deliveries
  - Documenting vaccine inventory information
  - Organizing and monitoring vaccines within storage units, including rotating stock and removing expired vaccines
  - Setting up temperature monitoring devices (TMDs) and recording daily temperatures
  - Responding to temperature excursions (out-of-range temperatures) and equipment failures
  - Overseeing vaccine transport (when necessary)
  - Overseeing emergency preparations

Support Staff

- Support staff may be identified to help with administrative responsibilities that the Vaccine Coordinator is responsible for ensuring are met.

Immunizers

- Pharmacists, Pharmacy Technicians, and Pharmacy Interns that are certified to administer immunizations.

Actionable Checklist for the Vaccine Coordinator

☐ Read this document thoroughly and then click through the links within the Change Package.

☐ Click **HERE** to view the UPDATED PDF that includes the Pharmacy Requirements that were listed in CPESN USA's CDC Pharmacy Agreement and how each of these topics help to meet the requirements.

☐ Complete the required trainings (see pages 5 & 6).

☐ Understand the Distribution of the Vaccine (see page 7).

☐ Become familiar with ancillary supplies and PPE provided by the CDC (see page 7).

  ● Begin to think through other supplies that the pharmacy may need.

☐ Understand the Vaccine Storage requirements (see page 8).

  ● Review your pharmacy's storage capabilities.

☐ Create a Storage and Handling Standard Operating Procedure (see page 8).

☐ Understand Digital Data Logger Requirements (see page 9)

☐ Ensure that you have access to and are utilizing your State's Immunization Information System (IIS) (see page 10).

☐ Sign up for the VaccineFinder, if you have not already (see page10).

☐ Determine which individuals will be administering the COVID-19 Vaccine (see page 11).

☐ Sign-up or ensure status for: Billing the Medical Benefit (not the PBM) for COVID-19 Vaccine (see page 12).

☐ Research Appointment-Based Model Scheduling Platforms and Begin to Implement (see page 13).

☐ Bookmark the websites below on your work computer.

CPESN USA COVID Best Practices for Vaccines: Click **HERE** to access the link.

● View Best Practices shared for COVID-19 Vaccine workflow implementation provided by CPESN Pharmacies across the country.

CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Training Programs and Reference Materials for Healthcare Professionals: Click **HERE** to access the link.

● This link is provided by the CDC and is updated frequently with training modules. Some of the training modules that are listed in this document are referenced throughout this change package. Topics include:

  ▪ Vaccine Storage and Handling

  ▪ Vaccine Administration

  ▪ Communication with Patients about Vaccines

  ▪ COVID-19 Vaccine Training and Clinical Materials (as they become available)

● **NOTE:** Check the date on the bottom left corner to determine if a link has been updated.

Primary Vaccine Coordinator Instructions

Stepwise Approach for the Primary Vaccine Coordinator

> The **Primary Vaccine Coordinator** will be the individual responsible for coordinating and implementing the COVID-19 Vaccine Program at the pharmacy.

STEP ONE: Each Pharmacy's **Vaccine Coordinator** needs to read this document thoroughly and click through the links

Trainings for each Vaccine Coordinator (complete prior to mid-late January)

COVID-19 Vaccine Training: General Overview of Immunization Best Practices for Healthcare Providers: Click **HERE**.

- **DESCRIPTION:** A web-based training course [no Continuing Education (CE)] outlining best practices and principles for healthcare professionals when preparing to administer COVID-19 vaccine. This includes a high-level overview of the following topics with links to detailed information: vaccine development and safety, safety monitoring programs, Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs), vaccine storage/handling, preparation, administration, PPE, scheduling, documentation, and reporting adverse events. Information on each vaccine product will be added when authorized by FDA.
- This training module will be continually reassessed and updated based on the evolving epidemiology of COVID-19 as well as when new vaccines are introduced in the United States.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Save the certificate of completion for your records.
  - You will be instructed on how to obtain a certificate of completion at the end of the training.

You Call the Shots (Module 10) – Storage and Handling: Click **HERE**

- 1 hour of free CE (Currently, credit expires 12/31/2020).
- **DESCRIPTION:** A comprehensive guide that reflects best practices for vaccine storage and handling from Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations, product information from vaccine manufacturers, and scientific studies.
- **ACTION ITEM:** Save the certificate of completion.
  - You will be instructed on how to obtain a certificate of completion at the end of the training.

You Call the Shots (Module 18) – Vaccine Administration: Click **HERE**

- 1 hour of free CE (Currently, credit expires 12/31/2020).
- **DESCRIPTION:** An interactive, web-based vaccine administration course that provides training using videos, job aids, and other resources.
- This module is not required. It is recommended for identified immunizers at the pharmacy that are new to vaccine administration or need a refresher on proper vaccine administration.

STEP TWO: The Primary Vaccine Coordinator should determine others in the pharmacy that should complete trainings

The CPESN Pharmacy Required Trainings should be completed by anyone involved with storage, handling, or administration of COVID-19 Vaccine. The certificates of completion should be saved for each person who completes the training.

TIP ➡ Review trainings listed within **STEP ONE**

STEP THREE: The Primary Vaccine Coordinator and other Pharmacy Leadership Team Members need to ensure that the pharmacy and its staff are meeting the requirements outlined in STEPS ONE and TWO and by reviewing the **Actionable Checklist** on Page 4.

CPESN Pharmacies who have selected CPESN USA as their Federal Pharmacy Partner will be required to submit proof of certain trainings and required documents for the Vaccine Coordinator, Immunizers, and for the Pharmacy prior to ordering vaccine.

Currently, the anticipated time for CPESN Pharmacies to meet these requirements are by late January/early February. This is dependent upon the Phase 2 Rollout.

Begin collecting the requirement documents in a folder.

Additional directions will be provided to CPESN Pharmacies that have signed the CDC Vaccine Agreement with CPESN USA on how to submit the required documents.

Requirements Checklist for CPESN Pharmacy Immunizers Partnered with CPESN USA as their Federal Pharmacy Partner*

☐ Copy of Immunization Training Proof (more details will be provided on the type of proof)

☐ Copy of certificate for any required training for immunizers as stated by CPESN USA or the CDC (see Steps TWO and THREE above).

## Requirements Checklist for a CPESN Pharmacy Partnered with CPESN USA as their Federal Pharmacy Partner*

☐ Proof of Pharmacy VaccineFinder Profile.

☐ Proof of Immunization Information System (if state has an IIS)

☐ Proof of proper storage, storage capacity, and temperature monitoring equipment

Requirements Checklists may change based on CDC Recommendations/Requirements

Understanding the Distribution of Vaccine

- Below is a graphic that can be found in a document titled "From the Factory to the Frontlines." (Click **HERE** to access).

OVERVIEW OF DISTRIBUTION AND ADMINISTRATION
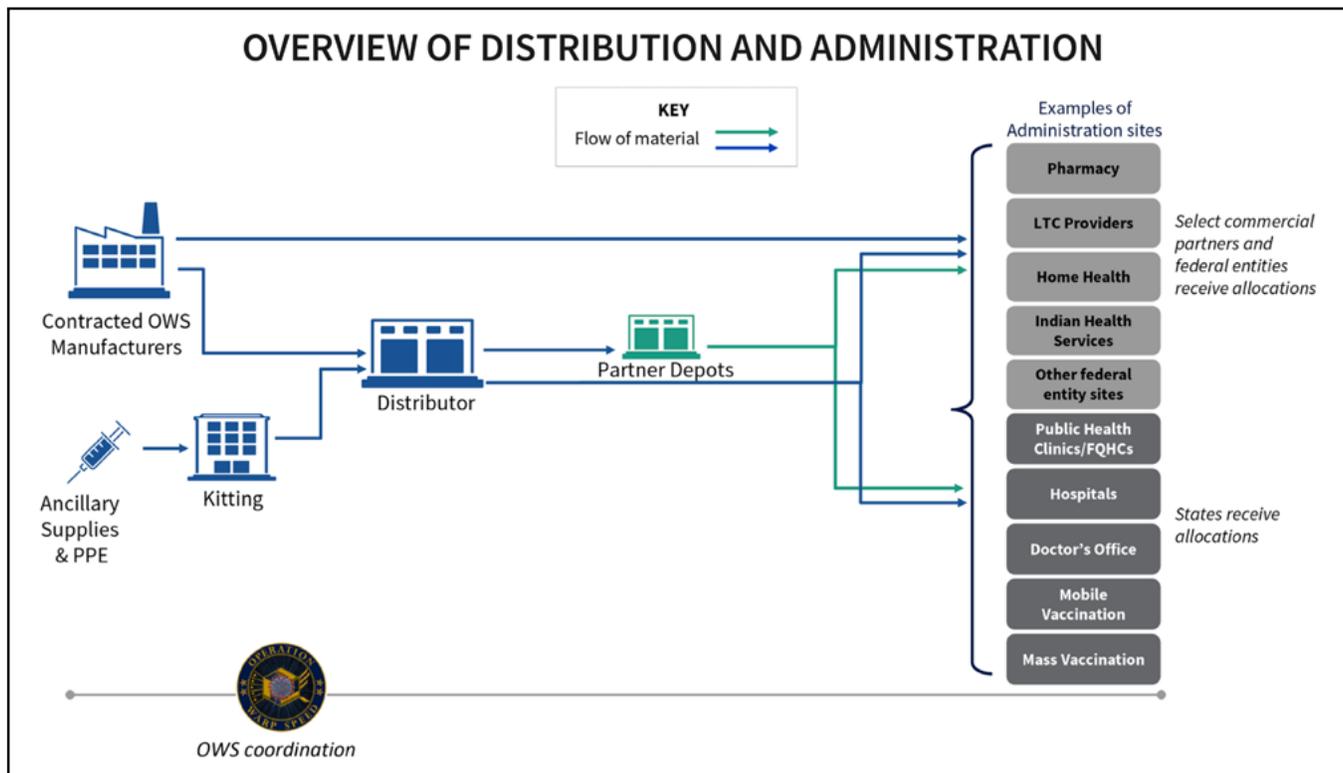
Legend. OWS = Operation Warp Speed (DHHS operation for COVID-19 vaccination);
Contracted OWS Manufacturers = COVID-19 vaccine manufacturers; Distributor = McKesson; Kitting = ancillary supplies

Ancillary Supplies and PPE

- Ancillary Supplies will be packaged in kits (see graphic above).

- The kits will be automatically ordered in amounts to match vaccine orders and will include:
  - Needles and syringes
  - Alcohol prep pads
  - 4 surgical masks and 2 face shields
  - COVID-19 vaccination record cards and reminder cards for vaccine recipients
  - For COVID-19 vaccines that require reconstitution with diluent or mixing with adjuvant at the point of administration, mixing kits with syringes, needles and other needed supplies will also be included.

- The kits **will not include:**
  - Sharps containers, gloves, and bandages

TIP ➤ Click **HERE** to see what PPE the CDC Recommends for COVID-19 Vaccine Administration.

Understand the Vaccine Storage Requirements and Create a Storage and Handling Standard Operation Procedure (SOP)

CPESN BEST PRACTICES

Click **HERE** to view the Storage and Handling Toolkit

The Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit is a comprehensive guide that reflects best practices for vaccine storage and handling from ACIP recommendations, product information from vaccine manufacturers, and scientific studies.

NOTE: The information below on storage was obtained from this toolkit.

Storage for Refrigerated and Regular Freezer Vaccines

- **Acceptable Forms of Storage:**
  - Use purpose-built or pharmaceutical-grade units designed to either refrigerate or freeze. These units can be compact, under-the-counter style or large.
  - Household-grade units can be an acceptable alternative to pharmaceutical-grade vaccine storage units. As the name implies, these units are primarily designed and marketed for home use. However, the freezer compartment of this type of unit is **NOT** recommended to store vaccines. There may be other areas of the refrigerated compartment that should be avoided as well. A separate freezer unit is necessary if your facility provides frozen vaccine.

  > **Summary of the Acceptable Forms:**
  > - **Combination Refrigerator/Freezer:** In addition to other medications, only refrigerated vaccine can be stored in the combo unit (not frozen vaccines).
  > - **Stand-alone Freezer:** Required for frozen vaccines. Must be totally separated from refrigerator (note the dormitory-style freezer below). Freezers can be smaller in size, however, keep in mind storage capacity.

- **Unacceptable Forms of Storage:**
  - **Do not store any vaccine in a dormitory-style or bar-style combined refrigerator/freezer unit under any circumstances.**
    - **Dormitory-style or bar-style combined definition:** those that have a freezer compartment within the refrigerator

- **If You Are Purchasing a New Freezer:**
  - It may take two to seven days to stabilize the temperature in a newly installed or repaired refrigerator. It may take two to three days for a freezer temperature to stabilize. Monitor the unit's temperature prior to storing the vaccine product.

    TIP ➤ Order the storage unit prior to February so you can test it before the vaccine arrives.

A Storage and Handling SOP is required for each pharmacy.

- The CDC recommends facilities develop and maintain clearly written, detailed, and up-to-date storage and handling SOP. SOPs should be reviewed by all staff and updated at least annually by the Primary Vaccine Coordinator annually.

CPESN PHARMACY REQUIREMENT

Requirement
- If you do not have a Storage and Handling SOP, the Primary Vaccine Coordinator should create one.
  - Click **HERE** to download the template, which can be edited to be specific to your pharmacy.
  - Type the pharmacy's name and when the policy was last updated at the top of the file. Print and store near your freezer.

➤ **Food and beverages should NEVER be stored in the unit with vaccines.**

Digital Data Logger Requirements

Temperature Monitoring Devices (TMD)

- **The CDC Recommends a Specific Type of TMD Called a "Digital Data Logger" (DDL).** A DDL provides the most accurate storage unit temperature information, including details on how long a unit has been operating outside the recommended temperature range.
  - A DDL provides detailed information on all temperatures recorded at preset intervals. This is different than a simple minimum/maximum thermometer, which only shows the coldest and warmest temperatures reached in a unit.

  > **One DDL is required per storage unit**
  > - At least one back-up DDL is required to keep on-hand. The back-up DDL is recommended to be stored in an easily accessible place.

- **Use DDLs with the Following Features:**
  - Detachable probe that best reflects vaccine temperatures (e.g., a probe buffered with glycol, glass beads, sand, or Teflon®)
  - Alarm for out-of-range temperatures
  - Low-battery indicator
  - Current, minimum, and maximum temperature display
  - Recommended uncertainty of +/-0.5° C (+/-1° F)
  - Logging interval (or reading rate) that can be programmed by the user to measure and record temperatures at least every 30 minutes

If you've had a DDL for a while... Calibration testing should be done every one to two years or according to the manufacturer's suggested timeline. TMDs can experience a "drift" over time, affecting their accuracy. This testing ensures the accuracy of the device continues to conform to nationally accepted standards.

- **The CDC DOES NOT Recommend the Following TMDs:**
  - Alcohol or mercury thermometers, even if placed in a fluid-filled, biosafe, liquid vial
  - Bimetal stem TMDs
  - TMDs used for food
  - Chart recorders
  - Infrared TMDs
  - TMDs that do not have a current and valid Certificate of Calibration Testing

> **CPESN BEST PRACTICES**
>
> **Note:** Some devices sold in hardware and appliance stores are designed to monitor temperatures for household food storage. These devices are not calibrated and are not accurate enough to ensure vaccines are stored within the correct temperature range. Using these devices can pose a significant risk of damaging vaccines.

What You Can Do Now to Start Preparing:

- Order an accurate DDL based on the CDC's recommendation.
- Test your current storage device to make sure the temperature ranges are appropriate.
  - Refrigerators should maintain temperatures between 2° C and 8° C (36° F and 46° F) .
  - Freezers should maintain temperatures between -50° C and -15° C (-58° F and +5° F).
  - **HINT:** Refrigerator or freezer thermostats should be set at the factory-set or midpoint temperature, which will decrease the likelihood of temperature excursions.

Temperature Excursions will be Discussed in a Later Change Package.

Immunization Information (IIS) System Requirements

- COVID-19 vaccination providers must document vaccine administration in their medical record systems **within 24 hours of administration**, and use their best efforts to report administration data to the relevant system for the jurisdiction (i.e., IIS) as soon as practical and no later than 72 hours after administration.

- If your state does not have an IIS, your Network Administrator (i.e., CPESN USA) will provide this capability.

> **CPESN BEST PRACTICES**
>
> **If your state has an IIS but you do not have an active profile, sign up your pharmacy/pharmacist immunizers as soon as possible.**
>
> **If pharmacy technicians are allowed to have access to the State IIS, assist the pharmacy technicians in getting access to the IIS also which will be helpful for reporting needs.**

Pharmacy VaccineFinder Profile Registration

- **VaccineFinder Registration:** Click **HERE** to access an overview of VaccineFinder.
  - **Description: VaccineFinder** will allow the general public know which COVID-19 vaccine the pharmacy has in-stock.

  STEP 1: Click **HERE** to access the **VaccineFinder website**.
  - Click "Find Vaccine" at the top. Search for a vaccine [i.e., flu (18+)] and include your zip code.
    - If your pharmacy is not listed and you have not applied for a Pharmacy Profile on VaccineFinder, proceed to step 2.
    - If your pharmacy is listed, great! Your Pharmacy has a Vaccine Finder Profile. Make sure you know your login information so when the time comes to offer COVID-19 vaccination(s), you can easily indicate that you offer a specific COVID-19 vaccine.

  STEP 2: Click **HERE** to **register for a VaccineFinder account. This ensures that your pharmacy will be listed in the CDC Directory as a vaccine provider**.
  - **NOTE:** There may be an additional profile that you may have to create as mentioned on this website. More information and directions will be available at a later date.

  STEP 3: You will receive a subsequent email that your account has been approved. Utilize this email to **complete your pharmacy's profile**.
  - It may take longer than one day for the account to be approved, even though the email states that it may take up to 24 hours. Look for an email with an account approval notification.

  STEP 4 (FUTURE USE): When a COVID-19 vaccination has been approved, update your pharmacy's profile for the vaccine that you have in-stock.
  - **NOTE:** More information and directions will be available at a later date.

The next 3 topics related to identifying immunizers, applying for mass immunizer status and medical billing, and scheduling platforms will continue to be developed and updates shared real-time on www.covidbestpractices.com/vaccines.

View the website for more information on each topic.

Determine Which Individuals will be Administering the COVID-19 Vaccine

STEP 1: Discuss the public health initiative with your pharmacy staff members

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recently expanded COVID-19 and childhood vaccine authority for pharmacists, pharmacy interns, and pharmacy technicians nationwide during the public health emergency. To optimize these opportunities and increase access for the communities you serve, it's important to know what's expected and to prepare for these expanded roles as immunizers.

STEP 2: Ask your pharmacy staff (e.g., technicians) who would like to learn a new skill (e.g., administering immunizations)

STEP 3: Obtain access to Immunization Administration Certificate Training for your pharmacy staff

- For Pharmacy Technician Certification Training
  - Check with your State Pharmacy Associations to determine if they have the ACPE accredited training available for pharmacy technicians
    - **NOTE:** The requirement is ACPE accredited Pharmacy Technician training for an Immunization Administration Certificate.
  - If your State Pharmacy Association or any other entity does not have access to training, check out the www.covidbestpractices.com/vaccines website for more information about available training options.

Billing the Medical Benefit (not the PBM) for COVID-19 Vaccine: Getting Started

COVID-19 has created new opportunities for pharmacies to be reimbursement outside of the PBM, through the medical benefit. COVID-19 Vaccines fall within this category:

Medical Billing Pathways:
1. **Medicare Part B**
   - **The information provided below is only for the Medicare Part B Pathway**
2. Medicaid
3. Commercial
4. Uninsured

Click **HERE** to view the CMS Medicare payment rates for COVID-19 vaccine administration

CPESN USA will be providing more resources about Medical Billing Intermediaries in the near future. Intermediaries will be important for medical billing pathways through the commercial pathways

The most updated information on the medical billing pathways provided by CPESN USA may be found at: www.covidbestpractices.com/vaccines.

Next Steps:
STEP 1: Ensure that each Pharmacist has a Pharmacist NPI
   - Click **HERE** to determine if you have a Pharmacist NPI. If not, create one using the same link.

STEP 2: Ensure that your Pharmacy is enrolled with Medicare Part B
   - If you are billing for immunizations (e.g., flu, pneumococcal) through Medicare Part B for reimbursement, you should have a PTAN for "Pharmacy" or "Mass Immunizer (Roster Biller)."
   - Double check through your PECOS online account
     - **Step 1a:** Sign-in to your PECOS online account by clicking **HERE**
     - **Step 1b:** Determine your "Existing Enrollments"
       - If your existing enrollment is not "Pharmacy" or "Mass Immunizer (Roster Biller)," then you will need to "Create Initial Enrollment Application" for this enrollment
   - View enrollments (scroll down) to see how you are enrolled

STEP 3: If your pharmacy is not enrolled with Medicare Part B, begin the enrollment process

   - In order to enroll with Medicare Part B, the process can be started by two different methods
     - **ONLINE FORM:** Enroll through PECOS by clicking **HERE**
     - **PAPER FORM:** Complete and mail theCMS-855B Form: Click **HERE**.
   - Prior to applying, it is encouraged for you to view more information and instructions on the CPESN Best Practices website.

Important Notes
   - The pharmacy may have more than 1 PTAN.
     - **Example:** Independent Clinical Lab (COVID-19 Point of Care Testing), DME Billing (CMS Form 855-S)
   - "Pharmacy" or "Mass Immunizer (Roster Biller)" are the appropriate PTANs for billing Medicare Part B for reimbursement of immunizations.

Research Appointment-Based Model Scheduling Platforms and Begin to Implement

Scheduling Platforms should be considered for managing and improving workflow.

- CPESN Pharmacies across the nation that have been undergoing practice transformation efforts through Flip the Pharmacy have noted countless times that being able to manage workflow is the key to success. CPESN USA believes that this is one of the most important aspects to the success of the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout.

- We recommend that Community Pharmacies preparing for the COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout are recommended to start controlling their workflow as much as possible (versus patients controlling).

> **Ideas for Controlling Workflow through the Appointment-Based Model**
>
> **1.** Enroll patients into your medication synchronization process
>
> **2.** Obtain access to a scheduling platform
>
> - For now, consider piloting the model for COVID-19 Testing, other Point of Care Testing opportunities, or immunizations (e.g., flu, zoster, pneumococcal).
>
> - When the COVID-19 Vaccine is available, you will have an appointment-based model ready and you will be able to manage your workflow.

Obtaining Access to a Scheduling Platform:

STEP 1: Choose a HIPAA Compliant platform to use for scheduling and/or to schedule appointments.

STEP 2: Obtain access to the survey/appointment scheduling tool (i.e., JotForm).

STEP 3: Create a workflow process to implement/utilize a scheduling platform for your pharmacy

> CPESN USA is providing a comparison chart of scheduling platforms. This chart was created using survey responses from NCPA | CPESN Fellows, CPESN Pharmacy Staff Members who have been involved with COVID-19 Test Scheduling, and Technology Partners.
>
> The comparison can be viewed on the Best Practices website and will be updated as CPESN USA receives more results.

Additional Resources:

NCPA Innovation Center is offering the FREE "No Excuses Immunization Program to help pharmacies implement or expand immunization services in the pharmacy. With the possibility of a COVID-19 vaccine soon to be approved combined with the influenza season, community pharmacies have an opportunity to play a critical role in public health.

NCPA
NATIONAL COMMUNITY
PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION

Guest speakers, many CPESN Pharmacy staff members, review a variety of topics: regulations, inventory management, workflow considerations, billing and reimbursement, and marketing strategies.

Click **HERE** to view bullet points about each topic, quickly sign up to receive the past webinars, and register for the remaining webinars in the series.

Preparing for Patient Education:

- "COVID-19 Vaccination Implementation and the "Vaccinate with Confidence" Strategy" Webinar Recording (Immunization Action Coalition). Click **HERE**
- Summary of CDC's "Answering Patient Questions" (Listed on Pages 15-17) Click **HERE**

Additional Helpful Links:

- CDC Immunization Courses: Webcasts and Self Study. Click **HERE**
- CDC CE Resources (includes steps on how to claim CE). Click **HERE**
- Interim Guidance for Routine and Influenza Immunization Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Click **HERE**
- CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program: Interim Guidance Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations. Click **HERE**
- Guidance for Planning Vaccination Clinics Held at Satellite, Temporary, or Off-Site Locations. Click **HERE**
- Checklist of Best Practices for Vaccination Clinics. Click **HERE**
- ACIP Presentation Slides: December 2020 Meeting (View the "Allocation..." PDF to understand Phase 1a, 1b, and 1c). Click **HERE**

CDC Patient Talking Points

COVID-19 Vaccine Resource: Click **HERE**

Questions About Vaccine and Administration

Patients May Ask:

- How does the vaccine work?
- Does this vaccine contain live virus?
- Is it inactivated?

To Respond, You Can:

- Explain, mRNA vaccines do not contain a live virus
- mRNA vaccines don't carry a risk of causing disease
- Explain that mRNA vaccines take advantage of the process that cells use to make proteins in order to trigger an immune response and build immunity to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Explain that in contrast, most vaccines use weakened or inactivated versions or components of the disease-causing pathogen to stimulate the body's immune response to create antibodies.

Patients May Ask:

- Is the vaccine that helpful?
- I heard getting COVID-19 gives you better and longer immunity than the protection a vaccine can give.
- Can it actually make my illness worse if I do end up getting COVID-19?

To Respond, You Can:

- Explain the potential serious risk COVID-19 infection poses to them and their loved ones if they get the illness or spread it to others. Remind them of the potential for long-term health issues after recovery from COVID-19 disease.
- Explain that scientists are still learning more about the virus that causes COVID-19. And it is not known whether getting COVID-19 disease will protect everyone against getting it again, or, if it does, how long that protection might last.
- Describe how the vaccine was tested in large clinical trials and what is currently known about its safety and effectiveness.

Be transparent that the vaccine is not a perfect fix. Patients will still need to practice other precautions like wearing a mask, social distancing, handwashing and other hygiene measures until public health officials say otherwise.

> ### Example:
>
> *"Both this disease and the vaccine are new. We don't know how long protection lasts for those who get infected or those who are vaccinated. What we do know is that COVID-19 has caused very serious illness and death for a lot of people. If you get COVID-19, you also risk giving it to loved ones who may get very sick. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine is a safer choice."*

Patients May Ask:
- How many shots am I going to need?

To Respond, You Can:
- Explain that two shots are generally needed to provide the best protection against COVID-19 and that the shots are given several weeks apart. The first shot primes the immune system, helping it recognize the virus, and the second shot strengthens the immune response.
- When applicable, explain the dosing options available in your office and advise the patient that they can set up an appointment before they leave to come back for a second dose. Note: The same vaccine brand must be used for both shots.

Example:

Nearly all COVID-19 vaccines being studied in the United States require two shots. The first shot starts building protection, but everyone has to come back a few weeks later for the second one to get the most protection the vaccine can offer.

Patients May Ask:
- How much will the shot hurt? Can it cause you to get very sick?

To Respond, You Can:
- Explain what the most common side effects from vaccination are and how severe they may be.
- Provide a comparison if it is appropriate for the patient (for example, pain after receiving Shingrix for older adults who have received it).
- Make sure patients know that a fever is a potential side effect and when they should seek medical care.
- Let them know that symptoms typically go away on their own within a week. Also let them know when they should seek medical care if their symptoms don't go away.
- Explain that the vaccine cannot give someone COVID-19.
- Explain that side effects are a sign that the immune system is working.

Example:

"Most people do not have serious problems after being vaccinated. We will understand more about mild side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine before we start to use it. However, your arm may be sore, red, or warm to the touch. These symptoms usually go away on their own within a week. Some people report getting a headache or fever when getting a vaccine. These side effects are a sign that your immune system is doing exactly what it is supposed to do. It is working and building up protection to disease."

Some COVID-19 vaccines may be more reactogenic than vaccines that people are familiar with. Information about specific side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine will be available when it is approved. It is important to set this expectation with your patient, in case they experience a strong reaction.

Other FAQs:

Are their special considerations on who should receive the vaccine first?

Groups considered for early vaccination if supply is limited

Before making an official recommendation, ACIP considered four groups to possibly recommend for early COVID-19 vaccination if supply is limited:

- Healthcare personnel
- Workers in essential and critical industries
- People at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness due to underlying medical conditions
- People 65 years and older

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I need to receive the vaccine?

There is not enough information currently available to say if or for how long after infection someone is protected from getting COVID-19 again; this is called natural immunity. Early evidence suggests natural immunity from COVID-19 may not last very long, but more studies are needed to better understand this. Until we have a vaccine available and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices makes recommendations to CDC on how to best use COVID-19 vaccines, CDC cannot comment on whether people who had COVID-19 should get a COVID-19 vaccine.

When can I stop wearing a mask and avoiding close contact with others after receiving the vaccine?

There is not enough information currently available to say if or when CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. Experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide before making that decision. Other factors, including how many people get vaccinated and how the virus is spreading in communities, will also affect this decision.