

# Federal Retail Pharmacy Program For COVID-19 Vaccination

## APRx FACT SHEET



Announced Feb. 2 by the Biden Administration, the **Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination** is a collaboration between the federal government, states and territories, and 21 national pharmacy partners and independent pharmacy networks — **including GNP/Elevate** — to increase access to COVID-19 vaccination across the United States. As vaccine availability increases over time, the program will ultimately expand to include all 40,000+ pharmacies in the nation. **Distribution will start at 1 million doses per week** to all retail pharmacy partners and will rise over time as vaccine supplies improve. **For the foreseeable future, all vaccine shipped under this initiative will be the Moderna vaccine, which requires only normal freezer temperatures for storage and has a refrigerated shelf life of 7 days.**

**NOTE:** This new program is in addition to the federal government's nationwide Phase II pharmacy distribution plan, in which ABDC/GNP will participate. The new program supplements Phase 1 distribution efforts. Phase II is expected to kick off in March when vaccine supplies improve.

### **There are 21 pharmacy partners participating in the program:**

- Walgreens (including Duane Reade)
- CVS Pharmacy, Inc. (including Long's)
- Walmart, Inc. (including Sam's Club)
- Rite Aid Corp.
- The Kroger Co.
- Publix Super Markets, Inc.
- Costco Wholesale Corp.
- Albertsons Companies, Inc.
- Hy-Vee, Inc.
- Meijer Inc.
- H-E-B, LP
- Retail Business Services, LLC (including Food Lion, Giant Foods)
- Southeastern Grocers
- Topco Associates, LLC (including Brookshire's Pharmacy)
- **CPESN USA**
- **GeriMed** (long-term care and retail pharmacies)
- **Good Neighbor Pharmacy and AmerisourceBergen's PSAO, Elevate Provider Network**
- Health Mart Pharmacies
- Innovatix (long-term care pharmacies)
- LeaderNET and Medicine Shoppe, Cardinal Health's PSAOs
- Managed Health Care Associates (retail and long-term care pharmacies)

Though some partners -- such as CVS, Walgreens and Walmart -- will participate in virtually all targeted states, states/territories were divided among the major wholesalers & CPESN:

- **ABDC/GNP was assigned Texas, Kentucky, Nebraska, Guam and Kansas (KS will be shared by all wholesalers). Texas isn't being shared by another wholesaler, though CVS, Walgreens, HEB, Walmart, etc. also will receive vaccine in Texas under the program.**
- CPESN was assigned Indiana, Kansas & Oklahoma
- McKesson was assigned Missouri, Oregon & Washington state, plus Kansas (everyone shares KS).
- Cardinal was assigned 9 states: GNP did not list them all, but they included Michigan, Mississippi and Nebraska, plus Kansas

## How Pharmacies are Selected

- The CDC has established "heat zones" in states, local jurisdictions and territories, representing high concentrations of 65+ population that are underserved by current vaccination efforts.
- ABDC/GNP is working with the CDC to establish the initial list of GNP/Elevate pharmacies in these heat zones. **ABDC can recommend pharmacies, but CDC has the final determination.**
- ABDC will share their list of selected pharmacies with us as soon as it is finalized.
- **Not all GNP/Elevate pharmacies in Texas will be selected for the program.**
- **Because of supply constraints, not all selected pharmacies will participate in week 1 distribution.** All selected pharmacies will eventually receive vaccine as supplies improve.
- ABDC says the CDC sets the timeline for expanding the Phase I program to more pharmacies, and that the agency has not released a timeline at this point.
- **ABDC stresses that any vaccine-ready pharmacy not selected for the new Phase I program is still included in the planned Phase II distribution.**

## To be selected for the new Phase 1 initiative, GNP/Elevate pharmacies:

- **Must be located in an area targeted by the CDC as a heat zone.**
- **Must have completed all GNP vaccine registration requirements**, including CDC training through GNP University and registration for Vaccine Finder (See [this GNP newsletter](#) for a full list of all registration requirements).
- Must be signed up with the state vaccine registry.
- **Must not be receiving, or signed up to receive, vaccine from a competing federal distribution partner.** This primarily applies to CPESN and GeriMed, as some APRx members are both GNP members and enrolled in CPESN or GeriMed. **The CDC will flag any doubly registered pharmacy it identifies and notify GNP. A GNP pharmacy signed up to receive vaccine through CPESN or GeriMed must cancel that registration if it wants to be eligible to receive vaccine through GNP. You cannot participate with more than one federal partner.**
- **Must have GNP Premiere or Elevate Advanced services** - **ABC has taken a lot of heat for this requirement, but says that GNP Premiere or Elevate Advanced is necessary for pharmacies to do the extensive vaccine reporting the CDC requires.**

## Initial Vaccine Distribution & Dose Limits

- **Distributions will start next week (week of Feb. 8)**
- **GNP is notifying selected pharmacies and providing additional information on next steps.**
- **Each selected pharmacy will be limited to 100 doses per week. The 100-dose limit applies to every pharmacy of every partner in this program.**

- CVS already announced that it is receiving 250,000 doses in the week 1 allocation, meaning the other 20 partners will share 750,000 doses. That means 7,500 participating pharmacies nationwide will receive the remaining 750,000-dose distribution in week 1, representing 18.75% of the nation's 40,000 retail pharmacies. GNP cautioned that the number of its pharmacies participating in week 1 will be "a small number."
- Because the Phase 1 rollout differs from state to state and jurisdiction to jurisdiction, each participating pharmacy will receive directions/guidance from the appropriate state or local health jurisdiction about which specific populations to vaccinate. This guidance could address specific ZIP codes or other geographic areas, specific facilities (nursing homes, rehab centers, etc.) or special patient populations.

## GNP/Elevate Pharmacy Enrollment

We have been pressing GNP for weeks to reopen pharmacy enrollment in its Phase II vaccination network and we reiterated yesterday that this is a critical "all hands on deck" situation that necessitates getting as many pharmacies ready to vaccinate as possible. GNP said it will allow pharmacies to continue to enroll for the Phase I and Phase II programs:

- The CDC allows GNP to submit an updated provider list by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month to allow those providers to participate in distributions for the following calendar month.
- GNP submits its list to the CDC on the 13<sup>th</sup> of each month, so pharmacies that start the enrollment process with GNP now realistically will not have time to make the list submitted in 9 days (unless they already have satisfied most or all of the requirements). Pharmacies just starting their enrollment process with GNP now would not be eligible for participation until April.
- GNP has identified the pharmacies that have failed to complete one or more enrollment requirements and will share that list with us. We'll be reaching out to those pharmacies to educate/motivate them to finish the enrollment process and to offer assistance as we can.
- **For help with vaccine enrollment issues, contact the Elevate Provider Network Helpdesk at 888-880-1388 or [elevate@amerisourcebergen.com](mailto:elevate@amerisourcebergen.com). For more resources and guidance, see <https://www.wearegnp.com/covid19/covid-19-vaccine>.**

## ABDC/GNP/Elevate Continue to Advocate for Pharmacy

The expansion of Phase 1 efforts to include pharmacies is due in part to ongoing lobbying efforts by GNP leaders and the ABDC federal lobby team with the CDC to win a greater place for independent pharmacy in the vaccine rollout. **GNP President Brian Nightengale and other GNP leaders have been engaged in weekly dialogue with the CDC since September, and along with NCPA, helped bring about the federal government's announcement of independent pharmacy's involvement in Phase II of the federal rollout.** The ABDC federal team has been advocating on behalf of independents with Congress and the new administration. American Pharmacies also is engaged in Texas and other selected states in pushing for greater pharmacy inclusion in state vaccine rollouts.

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