

# Long-term care Access to COVID-19 Vaccines – Next Steps

March 3, 2021

Minnesota's long-term care (LTC) facilities have made great strides in vaccinating their residents and staff and are nearing completion of the initial three-visit vaccination cycle. As facilities reach the end of this initial phase, a significant number of individual residents and staff are likely to need access to a 2<sup>nd</sup> vaccine dose, after receiving their first dose during this phase. Others, whether they were unable to receive a vaccine during the first phase or they have become newly eligible as new staff members of residents of a LTC facility, should consider vaccine administration of both first and second doses within 3-4 weeks of their arrival in LTC. This need will be ongoing.

This document is intended to assist leaders of LTC facilities to describe pathways for:

- Closing gaps in acquiring 2<sup>nd</sup> doses for residents or staff who received 1<sup>st</sup> administration during third clinics.
- Accessing vaccination for LTC residents and staff after the initial three-visit cycle.

Although Minnesota's vaccination strategy relies on hundreds of vaccinators around the state (clinics, pharmacies, State-run vaccination sites, local public health), and the supply of vaccine allocated to Minnesota continues to be far less than the demand for vaccination, the pathways for LTC to access vaccine will vary due to local capacity and pre-existing relationships. Therefore, the best approach for one facility may not be the best approach for another.

Vaccination of all LTC staff and residents who want to be vaccinated remains a high priority for the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). LTC residents and staff will remain as part of the priority 1a population. Therefore, they will continue to be eligible for vaccination by Minnesota vaccinators.

The following information provides guidance on:

- Securing access to 2<sup>nd</sup> dose vaccinations
- Ongoing vaccination planning resources

At any time, if you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to the SEOC LTC team: [health.seoclct@state.mn.us](mailto:health.seoclct@state.mn.us)

## Securing access to 2<sup>nd</sup> dose vaccinations

During the weekly vaccination reporting period of Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup> – Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup>, SNFs and ALFs were asked to complete a set of questions focused on their needs for acquiring 2<sup>nd</sup> dose vaccinations after their third clinics.

The SEOC LTC team is connecting directly with the LTC facility who indicated “Yes” assistance is needed for 2<sup>nd</sup> dose administration. If your facility responded to this week’s report, no further action is needed.

Any assignments made using the SEOC LTC Vaccination Teams (Essentia Health System, CentraCare Health System, and Specialists) can expect the following:

- Direct call from SEOC vaccination team.
- Documentation to minimally include: roster, date of birth, type of 1<sup>st</sup> dose of vaccine, and demographics

If the LTC facility has staff/residents seeking 1<sup>st</sup> dose administration during this 2<sup>nd</sup> dose clinic, please ensure to:

- Communicate request to the vaccinator upon scheduling.
- It is ideal to have groups of 10 individuals signed up for 1st dose administration. This is critical to ensure a full vial of vaccine is used. If your facility does not have 10 individuals identified or if the specific vaccinator is not able to administer 1st doses during this 2nd dose clinic, please see the Vaccination Resource Options sections below.

### LTC facilities who did not complete the vaccination weekly report from 2/18 – 2/24 – See below

Below is the process to be taken to best guide decision making efforts on where to go for assistance with acquiring 2<sup>nd</sup> dose vaccine administrations, if your facility **did not** report your weekly vaccination data during 2/18-2/24.

Who administered your 1<sup>st</sup> COVID-19 vaccine dose during your third/final clinic?

#### Local Public Health

If LPH provided administered 1<sup>st</sup> vaccine doses during the third/final clinic, please contact them to schedule and discuss next steps for 2<sup>nd</sup> dose administrations.

#### Pharmacy Partnership Program (PPP) and Other Non-LPH Vaccinators

If your third/final clinic was led by a PPP vaccinator (Walgreens, CVS, or Thrifty White) or other non-LPH state vaccinator (LTC pharmacies, local pharmacies, clinics, hospitals, etc.), please proceed with the following steps:

Confirm if your vaccinator will be able to provide your 2<sup>nd</sup> dose administrations.

- **If yes**, please continue through with scheduling your vaccination clinics.
- **If no**, please complete the following request form and the SEOC LTC staff will connect directly with you to outline next steps.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Dose vaccination assistance request form: <https://redcap-vac.web.health.state.mn.us/redcap/surveys/?s=3EDJMDNDA>

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## Ongoing vaccination planning resources

The following are a variety of vaccination resources for leaders of LTC facilities to explore in accessing vaccines for their residents and staff, on an ongoing basis.

This information will continue to evolve as the response progresses, vaccine supply increases, and state registered vaccinators increases. Therefore, as of March 2, 2021, SEOC LTC leaders highly recommend leveraging the list of options below.

### Vaccination Resource Options

The following are a list of vaccination options for LTC resident and staff to consider for their planning purposes. Please explore all options based on your facility's planning needs, recognizing that the ultimate long-term goal will be to align with your facility's vaccination plan.

#### Minnesota's Vaccine Connector – Most ideal for LTC staff

The Vaccine Connector is a tool for Minnesotans, who have not yet been vaccinated and are either eligible now or later, to be notified when their turn for a vaccine. This is a good option for individuals who are able to travel offsite, to a clinic or State vaccination site.

Website: <https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/connector/>

Once registered, all eligible individuals (currently priority 1a, educators/childcare staff, and 65+) will receive a list of vaccine provider clinics as well as receive communication of upcoming State-sponsored, health system, or local public health vaccination opportunities via the contact information that was provided upon registration.

#### Connect directly with primary care provider or health system clinic – Ideal for staff and residents

- Direct LTC staff to work directly with their primary care provider to schedule vaccination appointments.
- Assist/guide LTC residents to set up vaccination appointments with their primary care provider.
- Connect with your vaccine provider to explore their availability and/or process for scheduling vaccination clinics. This is most ideal for LTC facilities who have an existing relationship regarding vaccination administration (e.g. influenza), and who have at least 5 residents or staff needing vaccination.

### Connect with your typical vaccine provider – Ideal for staff and residents

- Connect with your vaccine provider to explore their availability and/or process for scheduling vaccination clinics. This is most ideal for LTC facilities who have an existing relationship regarding vaccination administration (e.g. influenza), and who have at least 5 residents or staff needing vaccination.
- Connect with a local pharmacy that is listed on the vaccination finder:  
<https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp>

### Connect directly with LPH

- Collaborate with LPH on any upcoming vaccination clinics available to your residents and/or staff.
- Connect with LPH if barriers exist in accessing vaccination assistance.

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## Planning checklist for LTC facility leaders

The following is a baseline set of questions to consider when developing your short- and long-term vaccination plan for staff and residents. It's important to recognize that COVID-19 vaccinations may not exactly align with your normal vaccination processes (e.g. influenza) in the short-term, however, the goal is to eventually align with them eventually.

Addressing staff vaccination planning:

- What standard guidance will be given (e.g. where to go, how to access information, etc.) to new staff around completion of vaccination administration?
- What plans are in place for staff declinations?

Addressing resident vaccination planning:

- What standard practice will be in place for new residents to receive vaccination administration?
- What limiting factors must be taking into consideration when selecting standard practice?
- Who will be responsible to arrange vaccination efforts for residents?
- What plans are in place for staff declinations?

Administration planning points:

- Who will be responsible to update vaccination planning efforts when state resources change?
- How will information be communicated to staff and residents?
- What communication is being shared with families?

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## Stay informed

As the response continues to evolve and vaccine capacity increases, it is vital for LTC facilities to stay strongly connected to their community vaccination resources. This can be achieved by staying in

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close communication with local partners such as local public health, health care coalitions, health care providers, etc.

Leverage your local public health and health care coalitions as a resource. Although they may not be able to serve as vaccinators, they are vital in sharing information regarding community efforts.

Lastly, ongoing discussions continue at the federal level regarding additional vaccinator programs/options. State and regional leaders will continue to share as much information as possible when it is made available.