**COVID-19 Vaccine**

**Leaders Guide**

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**Leader’s Guide**

A well-planned, ongoing COVID-19 vaccination program will be essential for Long Term Care facilities in the effort to mitigate the spread from COVID-19, quality of care and regulatory compliance. Providing education, support and encouragement to facility employees, residents and resident representatives will be essential in the effort to combat the spread of COVID-19. Ongoing education and support for facility employees will be essential in order to promote vaccine confidence. It will be essential for leaders of the facility to educate themselves to provide a clear message on the effectiveness and safety of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates, “Making sure LTCF residents can receive COVID-19 vaccination as soon as vaccines are available will help save the lives of those who are most at risk of dying from COVID-19.”1

“The communal nature of LTCFs and the population served (generally older adults often with underlying medical conditions) puts facility residents at increased risk of infection and severe illness from COVID-19.”2

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has partnered with participating pharmacies to offer the COVID-19 vaccine services for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities. Long Term Care Facilities were given the opportunity to sign up for the pharmacy partnership program in November of 2020.

In the Initial Phase, the pharmacy partners worked with facilities in a coordinated effort to offer the onsite vaccination services. The Pharmacy Partners were responsible for:

* Scheduling and coordinating on-site clinic date
* Ordering vaccines and supplies
* Ensuring cold chain management for vaccine
* Obtaining consent from facility staff and residents prior to vaccination and ensuring participants receive the vaccine [EUA (Emergency Use Authorization) Fact Sheet](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/eua/index.html)
* Providing on-site administration of vaccine to all residents and any staff not already vaccinated
* Reporting required vaccination data to the local, state/territorial, and federal jurisdictions within 72 hours of administering each dose.
* Adhering to all applicable CMS COVID-19 testing requirements for LTCF staff

Moving into the Maintenance Phase, a “direct allocation to long-term care pharmacies participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program” 3is being provided by the federal government to address new residents, new staff and any individual who may have been initially hesitant and have now indicated that they would like to be vaccinated. Facilities “may continue working with the federal pharmacy partner they were matched with or shift to another pharmacy provider that is enrolled with the jurisdiction to provide ongoing COVID-19 vaccination.”1

On May 11, 2021, The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) QSO-21-19-NH published an “Interim Final Rule-COVID-19 Vaccine Immunization Requirements for Residents and Staff”. CMS indicated: “This includes new requirements for educating residents or resident representatives and staff regarding the benefits and potential side effects associated with the COVID-19 vaccine, and offering the vaccine. Furthermore, LTC facilities must report COVID-19 vaccine and therapeutics treatment information to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN).”4

**F887: COVID-19 Immunizations** outlines requirements for:

* Policies and Procedures
* Offering COVID-19 Vaccines
* Education regarding benefits, risks, and potential side effects
* Provision of current information
* Consent
* Opportunity to accept or refuse vaccine
* Documentation required
* Reporting to NHSN
  + Resident and staff vaccinations
  + Therapeutics administered to residents for treatment of COVID-19
* Reporting COVID-19 vaccination adverse events

**Some areas to be considered for COVID-19 Vaccine Program may include:**

* Staff Resources:
* Infection Preventionist
* Licensed Nurses
* All Staff
* Administrator
* Director of Nursing Services and designee
* Education:
* Infection Control Practices and Prevention of Transmission
* Policies and Procedures for Infection Control
* COVID-19 Vaccine policy and procedure
* Proper use and application of Personal Protective Equipment
* Hand Hygiene procedures
* Resident Assessment
* Monitoring Residents for Side Effects and Severe Allergic Reactions
* Anaphylaxis Management
* Cleaning and Disinfection
* Reporting
* Documentation Considerations:
* Informed Consent
* Resident Assessment
* Side Effects and Sever Allergic Reactions
* Reporting
* Reporting
  + Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)
  + NHSN Reporting

**References and Resources:**

1Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination in Long-Term Care Facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/toolkits/long-term-care/faqs.html>

2Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Ensuring Access to COVID-19 Vaccine in Long-Term Care Facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/long-term-care/pharmacy-partnerships-access.html>

3Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Understanding the Pharmacy Partnership for Long Term Care Program. Last Reviewed February 19, 2021: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/long-term-care/pharmacy-partnerships.html>

4Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. QSO-21-19-NH. Interim Final Rule – COVID-19 Vaccine Immunization Requirements for Residents and Staff. May 11, 2021: <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-21-19-nh.pdf>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What Long-Term Care Facility Residents Need to Know About COVID-19 Vaccination. Updated Apr. 30, 2021: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/LTCF-residents.html>

3Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Understanding the Pharmacy Partnership for Long Term Care Program. Last Reviewed February 19, 2021: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/long-term-care/pharmacy-partnerships.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Long-Term Care Facility Toolkit: Preparing for COVID-19 Vaccination at Your Facility: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/toolkits/long-term-care/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Preparing Staff for COVID-19 Vaccination. Last Reviewed Mar. 10, 2021: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/toolkits/long-term-care/prepare-staff.html>

United States Health and Human Services. Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS): <https://vaers.hhs.gov/>

United States Health and Human Services. Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): <https://vaers.hhs.gov/faq.html>