

Federal Retail Pharmacy Program – Teachers, School Staff and Childcare Workers Frequently Asked Questions for Jurisdictions

Q: When will the federal retail pharmacy program begin prioritizing the vaccination of teachers, school staff, and childcare workers? Is this immediate?

A: On March 2nd, HHS issued a directive that all states immediately make eligible teachers, school staff, and childcare workers for COVID-19 vaccination. Starting the week of March 8, the [Federal Retail Pharmacy Program](#) will prioritize vaccinating these individuals during the month of March.

Q. Who will be eligible for vaccination?

A: The following will be eligible:

- Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade teachers;
- Licensed childcare centers and family childcare providers;
- Head Start and Early Head Start; and
- Pre-k through 12th grade classroom aides, bus drivers, janitors, counselors, administration staff and cafeteria workers.

Q: Are substitute teachers eligible for vaccination under this directive?

A: Yes.

Q: Are childcare workers employed by private households (e.g. nannies) eligible?

A: No. Childcare workers employed by private households are not covered under this directive.

Q: Will the program receive more vaccine allocation to expand pharmacy networks to ensure access to vaccine for teachers, school staff, and childcare workers?

A: For the week of March 8, the COVID-19 vaccine allocation for the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program will be 2.4 million first doses – 1 million first doses of Moderna vaccine and 1.4 million first doses of Pfizer. As supply increases, allocation for the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program will continue to increase.

Q: I am a teacher and am trying to get vaccinated. Why can I not find an appointment at any of the pharmacies that are part of this effort? Where can I go to schedule an appointment?

A: COVID-19 vaccine supply continues to be limited, and demand continues to exceed supply. However, teachers, school staff, and childcare workers are being prioritized for appointments in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program throughout the month of March. Appointments can be booked directly through the pharmacy partners.

To find where to get vaccinated, CDC has created a [webpage](#) that lists the pharmacy partners currently participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program in your state. Teachers, school staff, and childcare workers who are interested in getting vaccinated at their local pharmacy can also check the pharmacy's website to find out if COVID-19 vaccine is available. Participating locations for the federal retail pharmacy program are also listed on www.vaccinefinder.org.

Q: Not all pharmacy partners have been activated in each jurisdiction. Will pharmacy partners be activated in additional states to help achieve this directive?

A: Teachers, school staff and childcare workers are being prioritized for appointments through partners of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program throughout the month of March. The President has outlined a goal of getting every teacher, school staff member, and childcare worker their first shot by the end of March, through either this program or jurisdictions. CDC will continue to work closely with vaccination

partners to help implement this goal. Pharmacies are also encouraged to have operational plans in place to prepare for additional inventory in participating locations as more vaccine becomes available. New increases in supply will enable the program to expand the number of retail pharmacy stores nationwide.

Q: How will this new directive impact the current supply/demand as vaccines remain limited? Will a certain number of doses be set aside or reserved to vaccinate this population, or will it be first come, first-serve among all prioritized populations?

A: Pharmacies have been asked to prioritize vaccinating teachers, school staff, and childcare workers through the end of March. In addition, enrolled retail pharmacy providers are encouraged to utilize mobile and pop-up locations, as feasible, to reach this population. Pharmacies have been directed to honor all existing appointments for first and second doses, and clinics within communities that they may already be supporting.

Q: What about other priority populations? Will they still be able to keep existing appointments, and book new ones, even if they are not teachers?

A: Pharmacies will honor all existing appointments. We are asking pharmacies to set aside unbooked vaccination slots starting the week of March 8 and continuing throughout the month of March for teachers, school staff and childcare workers. If extra slots are available, these will be expanded to other populations that meet state eligibility criteria.

Q: What about vaccination clinics already planned by pharmacy partners to vaccinate populations other than teachers, school staff and childcare workers. Will these go on as planned?

A: Yes. Pharmacies have been directed to honor all existing vaccination clinics within communities that they have already committed to supporting.

Q: Will pharmacy partners be asked to shift second doses to vaccinate the populations prioritized under this new directive?

A: No. Pharmacy partners should ensure that anyone who is scheduled to receive a second dose completes their series without interruption. Pharmacies have been directed to honor all existing vaccination appointments within other population groups while also prioritizing vaccinating teachers, school staff, and childcare workers for slots that are not yet booked. This could include providing teachers, school staff and childcare workers exclusive access to booking appointments online or utilizing mobile and pop-up locations, as feasible, to reach this population.

Q: Do teachers, school staff, and childcare workers need to show proof of employment to receive a vaccination appointment?

A: People will need to self-attest to being a teacher, school staff, or childcare worker. This assures that no one will be turned away for lack of specific identification documents (e.g., school identification badge) and eases the burden on participating pharmacies and individuals. There may be screening questions when booking an appointment to confirm eligibility.

Q. Will teachers get priority at other vaccination locations or just pharmacies?

A: Teachers, school staff, and childcare workers are being prioritized for vaccination appointments through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program throughout the month of March. Additionally, the President has directed all states and jurisdictions to ensure teachers, school staff, and childcare workers are listed as a currently eligible priority group in their vaccination plans.

Q: How will CDC track that teachers, school staff and childcare workers are getting vaccinated?

A: All pharmacy partners enrolled in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program have been directed to report this information to CDC based on information collected as part of their screening tools and/or submit this information as part of the vaccine administration data.

Q: How will this impact the metrics for Federal Retail Pharmacy Program and ensuring vaccine equity? Or is the goal more simply to get shots into arms of teachers?

A: CDC will work closely with partners to evaluate program metrics, optimize vaccine uptake, and equitable distribution of vaccine. We recognize this initiative may lead to shifts in the approach that partners take on selecting locations.

Q: Will teachers, school staff and childcare worker vaccinations happen in more of a closed POD setting or do you envision them coming to pharmacies for vaccination?

A: Pharmacies have been asked to prioritize vaccinating teachers, school staff, and childcare workers through the end of March. This could include providing them exclusive access to booking appointments online or utilizing mobile and pop-up locations, as feasible, to reach this population.

This program is designed to capitalize on our pharmacy partners' expertise in managing supply and demand in their network of retail locations, and to safely and efficiently vaccinate people in their communities. CDC is working closely with partners to identify strategies for prioritizing teachers, school staff, and childcare workers.

Q: Will this impact jurisdictions' vaccine allocations?

A: No, the allocation provided for the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program will remain separate from jurisdictions' weekly allocations. Vaccine allocations to jurisdictions have increased week-over-week.

Q: Given the need to get so many teachers, school staff, and childcare workers vaccinated within a short timeframe, will you be focusing on the J&J vaccine since it's a single dose and easier to store and transport?

A: Eligible teachers, school staff, and childcare workers may receive any of the three FDA-authorized and CDC-recommended COVID-19 vaccines, and are encouraged to receive the vaccine that is available to them first.

Q: What are the different ways pharmacies can prioritize teachers?

A: Pharmacies are directed to prioritize vaccinating teachers, school staff, and childcare workers through the end of March. This could include providing them exclusive access to booking appointments online or utilizing mobile and pop-up locations, as feasible, to reach this population.

Additional strategies may include designing screeners and schedulers to facilitate scheduling specifically for teachers, school staff, and childcare workers; and conducting community clinics or store drive-up clinics for teachers, school staff, and childcare workers only. Pharmacies are also encouraged to offer off-hours appointments to best meet the needs of this population.

Q: Will teachers, school staff, and childcare workers be prioritized by age for scheduling purposes?

A: No. There are no age restrictions or priority age groups with this directive.

Q: What is the guidance for jurisdictions who have already vaccinated a large percentage of teachers, school staff, and childcare worker populations?

A: We recognize that jurisdictions are in different stages of vaccination of teachers, school staff, and

childcare workers. Pharmacies should use their scheduling tools and other outreach methods to achieve the aims of the directive while also ensuring that use of vaccine is maximized among other jurisdictional priority groups. Should there be availability, pharmacies have been directed to expand to other populations that meet state eligibility criteria.

Q: For pharmacies that are receiving state allocations directly or from the transfer program, do they need to use all product in accordance with this directive?

A: Yes. The March 2 directive from the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states that “All COVID-19 vaccination providers are directed and required to make available and administer, as one of the currently eligible groups, COVID-19 vaccine” to teachers, school staff, and childcare workers. If allocations from the transfer program are provided to support clinics, pharmacies may continue to honor those in coordination with states as appropriate.

Q: For pharmacies that are receiving state allocations directly or from the transfer program, do they need to prioritize unbooked vaccination slots for teachers, school staff, and childcare workers?

A: Yes, pharmacies participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program will need to prioritize vaccination for teachers, school workers, and childcare workers regardless of where the vaccine allocation is coming from. Transfers provided to pharmacy partners for specific population clinics outside of the retail setting (off-site clinics) or transfers provided for long-term care facilities are not impacted by this.

Q: Up until now, pharmacy partners have followed the eligibility criteria outlined by the jurisdictions. How will this change that? And what will you do if a jurisdiction doesn't make teachers, school staff, and childcare workers eligible?

A: The federal government is in close coordination with jurisdictions across the country. The President has directed jurisdictions to ensure teachers, school staff, and childcare workers are included in their currently eligible priority groups for vaccinations. The federal government will provide states and jurisdictions with assistance to achieve the goal of providing teachers, school staff, and childcare workers with at least their first dose by the end of March. Starting the week of March 8, the [Federal Retail Pharmacy Program](#) will prioritize vaccinating these individuals during the month of March – this will supersede jurisdictions who currently have asked pharmacies to only cover select population groups. We are working with jurisdictions to ensure that teachers, school staff and childcare workers are immediately eligible for vaccination throughout the state.