

To COVID-19 Vaccine Providers:

On September 11, 2023, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved new 2023-2024 COVID-19 mRNA vaccines for all individuals 12 years of age and older and authorized under emergency use mRNA vaccines in individuals 6 months through 11 years of age. As a result:

- The United States government is longer the sole source of COVID-19 vaccine.
- The distribution of 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines is shifting to more traditional pathways.
- The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) COVID-19 Vaccine Outbreak Program, in its current form, has ended. ODH initiated the process to unenroll COVID-19 vaccine outbreak providers from the program.
- 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines will be available on the commercial market for providers, including pharmacy locations, to purchase and administer to patients with private insurance, patients with Medicare, and adult patients with Medicaid.
- The ODH Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program will provide vaccine, at no charge, to enrolled providers for administration to eligible children.
- The ODH Adult COVID-19 Bridge Vaccination program will provide vaccine, at no charge, to enrolled providers for adults who are not insured or who have no coverage for COVID-19 vaccine.

About the Adult COVID-19 Bridge Vaccination and Vaccines for Children Programs

The **ODH Adult COVID-19 Bridge Vaccination Program** is a temporary federal program that will provide access to COVID-19 vaccines for uninsured and underinsured adults age 19 years and older¹. The program will not provide access to other routinely recommended vaccines for adults and will end on December 31, 2024. COVID-19 vaccine will be supplied from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) using section 317 funding and will be administered by ODH through existing public health departments and some Federally Qualified Health Centers.

The newly approved and authorized COVID-19 vaccines will also be available through the **Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program**. COVID-19 vaccines ordered through the VFC Program are to be administered to children through age 18 years who meet VFC eligibility criteria². VFC provider locations are required to order and maintain COVID-19 vaccine inventories for both VFC and non-VFC-eligible patients. If your site is not enrolled in the VFC program and serves eligible children, please reach out to the ODH Immunization program for information on how to enroll.

Existing Bivalent COVID-19 Vaccine Inventory

Following FDA's approval of the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines, **all bivalent mRNA COVID-19 Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are no longer to be administered.**

Novavax bivalent COVID-19 vaccine continues under the Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) with no usage changes. This vaccine may continue to be used until it reaches expiry on October 31, 2023, or until the new Novavax 2023-2024 COVID-19 product becomes available/authorized, whichever occurs first.

COVID-19 outbreak providers are to:

- **Immediately stop administering all bivalent mRNA COVID-19 Pfizer and Moderna vaccine.**
- Remove bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine from their storage units.
- Dispose of the unused or expired COVID-19 vaccine according to the [Ohio Environmental Protection Agency](#).
- Remove bivalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccine from inventory in the ImpactSIIS Vaccine Ordering and Management System (VOMS) by decrementing all mRNA vaccine inventory as '*Drawn Up, Not Used*' to achieve a zero balance.
- If your site plans to administer the new 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine, reschedule COVID-19 vaccine appointments for a future date after the new vaccines will be available.
- If your site will not be administering the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine, refer your patients to a provider that will be offering the vaccines.

Thank you for your partnership throughout the COVID-19 vaccine pandemic response. Your efforts helped to prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. For questions about the Adult COVID-19 Vaccine Bridge or VFC Programs, please call the ODH Provider Call Center between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at 1-844-9ODHVAX (1-844-963-4829) or email COVIDVACCINE@odh.ohio.gov.

Sincerely,

Ohio Department of Health COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Relations Team

1. Adult Bridge Vaccine Eligibility

Adults over 19 years must meet at least one of the following criteria to be eligible for vaccine through the ODH COVID-19 Bridge Vaccine Program:

- **Uninsured:** A person who does not have health insurance. (Medicaid and Medicare are considered insurance.)
- **Underinsured:**
 - A person who has health insurance, but the insurance does not include any vaccines.
 - A person whose insurance covers only selected vaccines.
 - A person whose insurance does not provide first-dollar coverage for vaccines.

2. VFC Vaccine Eligibility

Children through age 18 years who meet at least one of the following four criteria are considered federally vaccine-eligible and therefore eligible for vaccine through the VFC program:

- **Medicaid eligible:** A child who has health insurance covered by a state Medicaid program.
- **Uninsured:** A child who has no health insurance coverage.
- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** As defined by the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603).

- **Underinsured:** Underinsured children are eligible to receive VFC vaccine only through a federally qualified health center (FQHC), rural health clinic (RHC), or a public health department that receives deputized authority from a FQHC or RHC.

For the purposes of VFC, underinsured includes:

- Children who have commercial (private) health insurance, but the coverage does not include vaccines.
- Children whose insurance covers only selected vaccines (VFC eligible for non-covered vaccines only).
- Children whose insurance caps vaccine coverage at a certain amount (once that coverage amount is reached, these children are categorized as underinsured).