



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc
Commissioner

February 4, 2022

Dear Colleague,

Despite our exceptional progress in vaccinating New Yorkers, only 31% of children ages 5 to 11 in New York City (NYC) are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The NYC Commissioner of Health is urging all healthcare providers offering pediatric primary care to offer COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 years as a part of their routine services. **Your participation in the COVID-19 vaccination program can increase vaccination rates for your patients.**

Many parents strongly prefer to have their children vaccinated at their regular doctor's office. Healthcare providers are a trusted source of COVID-19 vaccine information. Onsite vaccination that is integrated into pediatric primary care is a natural extension of these conversations. Integrating vaccination into other primary care services also mitigates barriers such as scheduling and transportation that disproportionately affect Black and Latino New Yorkers and low-income families. COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same time as other vaccines.

We expect demand for COVID-19 vaccination in primary care settings to grow in the coming weeks if vaccines are authorized for children younger than 5. An independent advisory committee to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is meeting on February 15 to review Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine data for children ages 6 months to 4 years and to vote on whether to recommend Emergency Use Authorization for this vaccine. Now is the time to prepare for this likely expansion by incorporating COVID-19 vaccination into routine vaccination services. Pediatric providers already have experience reconstituting vaccine and managing multiple vaccine products so preparations should be straightforward.

Providers will not be penalized for COVID-19 vaccine wastage. It is preferable to puncture a vial to vaccinate even one child, rather than miss an opportunity to vaccinate. As a reminder, providers can order Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5 to 11 in increments as small as 120 doses by emailing COVIDVax@health.nyc.gov. Pfizer vaccine can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 10 weeks.

Please reach out to COVIDVax@health.nyc.gov if you would like assistance with becoming a COVID-19 vaccine provider. All providers, including providers affiliated with a healthcare system, have the option to enroll in the COVID-19 vaccination program directly. Direct enrollment allows providers to order and receive COVID-19 vaccine as they do for the Vaccines for Children program and other routine vaccines. If you are already enrolled in the COVID-19 vaccination program as an affiliated provider and would like vaccine shipped directly to your outpatient site, please update the shipping address associated with your program enrollment. Our staff are available to provide support at every step of the process.

Thank you for everything you have done throughout the pandemic. We have tremendous gratitude.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jane R. Zucker'.

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization