

CLINICAL ALERT

NOVEMBER | 2022

PharMerica

White House and CMS Campaign to Increase COVID-19 Bivalent Booster Rates

Background

11/22/2022: The Biden Administration [announced a six-week campaign](#) focused on seniors and the communities hardest hit by COVID-19 to boost rates of vaccination with updated (bivalent) COVID-19 vaccines.

This campaign reinforces the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) [requirement for nursing homes](#) to **EDUCATE residents and staff on benefits of COVID-19 vaccination, to OFFER the COVID-19 vaccine unless medically contraindicated or they have already been immunized, and to DOCUMENT this education and informed consent/declination appropriately.**

Regulations

State survey agencies will be verifying that this requirement is being complied with and executing enforcement actions.

CMS states:

- Nursing homes (NHs) with low vaccination rates will be referred to state survey agencies for scrutiny
- NHs that do not offer COVID-19 vaccines and educate on the benefits of COVID-19 vaccinations will face enforcement actions, including the need to submit corrective action plans to achieve compliance
- Data will be provided to states and health plans about the poorest performing NHs to help them encourage increased vaccination uptake through the [CMS COVID-19 Nursing Home Data](#) website

Clinical Data

[Recent data from the CDC](#) shows that a second COVID-19 booster dose provides additional protection against COVID-19 associated severe outcomes among NH residents compared to residents receiving a single booster dose:

“In a large cohort of NH residents, receipt of a 2nd mRNA COVID-19 booster dose during circulation of SARS-CoV-2 Omicron subvariants was **74% effective at 60 days against severe COVID-19–related outcomes** (including hospitalization or death) and **90% against death alone** compared with receipt of a single booster dose.”

Staying up to date on recommended COVID-19 vaccine booster doses is particularly important for NH residents, due to underlying health conditions that may increase susceptibility to serious illness and hospitalization from COVID-19.

Facility / Pharmacy Action Steps

Facility healthcare providers and pharmacies must take action to ensure patients continue to receive appropriate COVID-19 vaccines and therapy, per current regulations and interim guidance:

- PharMerica pharmacies maintain access to the updated (bivalent) booster vaccines. With the expected surge in demand this regulatory update will cause, facility and pharmacy staff should coordinate to place timely and anticipatory orders of COVID-19 bivalent booster vaccine(s).
- Maintain communication to ascertain appropriate time to receive additional COVID-19 vaccine(s) and oral antiviral therapies in advance of expected surges of requests.
- Communicate and document information on any shortages or distribution delays.
- Refer to the [latest updated information from the National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#) for use of clinically appropriate COVID-19 therapeutics for management of non-hospitalized adults.