

# CLINICAL **ADVISORY**

January 2023

PharMerica

## Strategies to Increase COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence and Uptake in Long-Term-Care Communities

### Background

While COVID-19 vaccination remains a critical step in protecting individuals and communities from the COVID-19 virus, many Americans have still not been fully vaccinated, despite eligibility and adequate vaccine supply.

The long-term-care community has unique barriers and needs that require focused solutions and intervention strategies to increase vaccine confidence and vaccine uptake.

- **Vaccine confidence** is the belief that vaccines work, are safe, and are part of a trustworthy medical system. Without some level of confidence, people will not move toward receiving a vaccine.
- **Vaccine uptake** refers to the proportion of the population that has received a vaccine.

LTCF administrators may consider the strategies below to increase staff and resident confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines' safety and efficacy and increase uptake in their long-term care communities.

### Elect Vaccine Champions

**Appoint Vaccine Champions** as ambassadors to train staff members to disseminate important COVID-19 vaccine information in their communities. Champions are most effective when fellow staff and residents trust and respect their opinion.

*Anyone can be a Vaccine Champion; it is not restricted to leaders or people in clinical positions!*

Discussing the risk of contracting disease and the decision to vaccinate impacts residents' decision to get vaccinated. Endorsements from a vaccine champion can help spread credible information about the COVID-19 vaccines. These efforts help increase vaccinations and overcome misinformation and distrust of institutions.

### Action Steps:

- Empower Vaccine Champions to educate the community about the COVID-19 vaccines, notify residents of their vaccination eligibility, and spread the word about vaccination locations.
- Facilities can support Vaccine Champions by offering education opportunities to learn about public health, vaccination, health communication, and the COVID-19 vaccines.

### Standardize COVID-19 Vaccination into Routine Practice

Create standard practice routines, such as offering the COVID-19 vaccine as a default option during provider visits and integrating vaccination into regular practice procedures, to reduce missed opportunities for vaccination.

Training staff on COVID-19 vaccination related topics, such as providing accurate information to residents with questions and standardizing scheduling for vaccine-eligible residents, lays the groundwork for integrating vaccination into routine practice.

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### Action Steps:

- Encourage all providers to incorporate education and vaccination reminders as part of their routine resident care activities to achieve a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Use this four-step process at every resident encounter to help “SAVE” lives:
  - **Seek** residents’ COVID-19 vaccination status verbally or through immunization records (i.e., upon admission)
  - **Ask/Educate** unvaccinated residents about the vaccines, and offer more information if they’re unsure
  - **Vaccinate** residents who agree to be vaccinated, or refer them to a COVID-19 vaccine provider
  - **Empower** residents and staff to share their vaccination status with their friends, families, and communities

### Provide Education to Residents and Staff

Effective education on the COVID-19 vaccine delivered by trusted messengers combats misinformation and improves vaccine confidence.

### Action Steps:

- Provide frequent education to staff on the COVID-19 vaccine topics including order process, current guidelines, and vaccine documentation requirements.
- Include medical directors and nurse practitioners in providing education to residents and their family members and answer any COVID-19 vaccine related questions they may have.

### Make It Convenient

Offer residents a convenient option to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, such as vaccine clinics or during routine appointments, to relieve barriers for residents with unreliable transportation or resistance to scheduling a vaccination.

### Action Steps:

- Provide COVID-19 vaccination clinics as an opportunity for all eligible residents to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
  - Reach out to your PharMerica account manager, mobile clinics, or local health department to manage process of ordering vaccines, tracking eligibility, administration, and documentation of vaccinations as needed.
- Develop vaccine dashboards and reporting tools to view resident and stakeholder vaccine status and eligibility.
- Bundle COVID-19 vaccine scheduling with other recommended vaccines the residents are due for (e.g., offer the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as the Influenza vaccine during flu season) to ensure residents stay up to date on all recommended vaccines for protection against infectious diseases.

### Additional Information

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided additional details on strategies to improve vaccine uptake and vaccinate with confidence in their [COVID-19 Vaccination Field Guide](#). Each facility should tailor their vaccination approach based on the individual needs and barriers of their unique residents and staff.