



November 19, 2020

RE: Enrollment in the DHEC COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Dear Hospital Administrators and Health Care Providers:

As the country moves closer to approved COVID-19 vaccines, it is critical that hospitals and health care providers enroll now in the DHEC COVID-19 Vaccination Program to be positioned to receive and administer COVID-19 vaccines as soon as they are available. Details about enrollment, provider requirements and frequently asked questions are found on the [DHEC website](#).

Initially, hospitals will have a key role in successfully achieving high COVID-19 vaccine coverage for critical workers in the Phase 1A vaccination. DHEC will ask hospitals to assume responsibility for vaccinating staff and contractors with priority designation working in their facilities in the first phase of COVID-19 vaccine distribution. While direct distribution to hospitals that will administer the vaccine is preferred and strongly encouraged, hospitals may elect to consult with DHEC to obtain approval to redistribute vaccines to other affiliated locations.

Although the anticipated first vaccine (Pfizer) requires ultra-cold storage and handling processes (-70°C), no provider is required to have ultra-cold storage equipment to enroll in the program. Hospitals without ultra-cold storage capability must have a vaccination strategy to vaccinate eligible staff within 15 days if using the thermal shipper/dry ice replenishment model or within 5 days if using the refrigerated storage model of the Pfizer vaccine. DHEC will advise enrollees based on their storage and handling capacities once they are approved and activated for Phase 1A.

Program enrollment requires each providing organization to complete the [CDC's COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement](#). These terms may not be altered and require the signatures of the organization's CEO and CMO. DHEC will approve providers whose application ensures compliance with the provider agreement terms.

In accordance with the Provider Agreement, providers will need to report vaccine administration data, unused vaccines, and adverse events. The primary system that will be used to collect vaccine administration data and unused vaccines in phase 1, will be VAMS, the CDC's Vaccine Administration Management System. VAMS access and training for enrolled vaccine providers is forthcoming. In phase 2, the state's registry, which is known as the Statewide Immunization Online Network (SIMON), will be the primary system used for vaccine reporting. Administered doses in VAMS will transfer via electronic feed to SIMON and will not require duplicate data entry. While most hospital systems that administer vaccines already have a connection to SIMON, if access is needed, you can request access by emailing SIMON@dhec.sc.gov. More information about SIMON can be found [here](#). Providers must report vaccine adverse events to [VAERS](#).

Enrolling in the DHEC COVID-19 Vaccination Program adds one more critical tool to the mitigation measures your facility is taking to combat this pandemic, and enrollment is necessary to ensure your workers gain access to COVID-19 vaccines as quickly and seamlessly as possible. We recognize hospitals and health care providers are managing a number of competing priorities and challenges, but we ask that your facility follow this [link](#) to enroll no later than Monday, November 23 at 5:00 p.m. to be considered to receive vaccine for Phase 1 from DHEC.

We thank you for all your efforts for the health and well-being of South Carolina's residents. We look forward to your continued partnership and collaboration in this critical arena.

Respectfully,

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC)
South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA)
South Carolina Medical Association (SCMA)
South Carolina Office of Rural Health (SCORH)
South Carolina Primary Health Care Association (SCPHCA)