



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

GALE R. BURSTEIN, MD, MPH
COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

June 24, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

I am asking you to offer COVID-19 vaccine to eligible patients and their family members in your office.

Much has changed in COVID-19 vaccine administration. Previously NYSODH distributed COVID-19 vaccines to pharmacies and other large distribution sites. However, the focus has appropriately shifted to primary care and OBGYN offices as the preferred COVID-19 vaccine administration sites. Many of the previous community provider barriers to administering COVID-19 vaccine no longer exist.

- Community providers can order any quantity of any available COVID-19 vaccine from the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH). **There is no minimum or maximum COVID-19 vaccine order requirement from ECDOH.** COVID-19 vaccine is available from ECDOH to community providers Monday through Friday with just 24 hours' notice.
- **COVID-19 vaccine storage is compatible with community provider vaccine refrigerator storage systems.** Pfizer and Moderna vaccines may be stored in a vaccine refrigerator (2-8°C/36 - 46°F) for up to 31 and 30 days, respectively. Janssen vaccine, which is stored refrigerate, remains stable until its expiration date.
- **No Minimum Interval Between COVID-19 Vaccine and Other Vaccine administration.** COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may now be administered without regard to timing. This includes simultaneous administration of COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines on the same day, as well as coadministration within 14 days
- **NYSDOH eliminated penalties for RESPONSIBLE WASTAGE of COVID-19 Vaccine if cannot use all doses in a vial due to low demand.** The following is an excerpt from the NYDOH Guidance for the NYS COVID-19 Vaccination Program regarding vaccine wastage: *"The CDC released guidance on May 11th regarding wastage with the critical message to "take every opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person." As more vaccination opportunities are created, the likelihood of leaving unused doses in a vial may increase. While enrolled providers must continue to follow best practices to use every dose possible, it should not be at the expense of missing an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person when they are ready to get vaccinated."*

The attached documents explain:

- NYSDOH COVID-19 vaccination program enrollment

- COVID-19 transfer and storage
- Differences between the three COVID-19 vaccine products

- ECDOH COVID-19 vaccine order form (needles, syringes, VIS, etc. included)
- Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine reconstitution instructions

Thank you for your efforts to ensure all eligible Erie County residents are fully vaccinated to protect against COVID-19 vaccine. The physician office is the optimal vaccination location for all, including the COVID-19, vaccine.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gale Burstein", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Gale Burstein, MD, MPH, FAAP
Commissioner
Erie County Department of Health