COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination Program in NYC:
An Overview for Mental Hygiene Providers

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The information presented is based on our best knowledge as of today's date and is subject to change.

Outline

- Intro to COVID-19 Vaccines
- COVID-19 Vaccines and Equity
- COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution
- Building COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence
- Resources
- Q&A

Intro to COVID-19 Vaccines

Role of Vaccines

- Vaccines provide protection to the person vaccinated but can also protect the people around them and ultimately whole communities or populations.
- No vaccine works 100% of the time and some people can’t be vaccinated because of a medical condition or because a vaccine has not been approved for some groups, such as children.
- This is why it is important for as many people as possible to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 Vaccine Development

- COVID-19 vaccine development built on years of study, including research on vaccines for other coronaviruses.
- Federal government provided special funding to allow simultaneous development, testing and production of vaccine candidates.
- Companies began manufacturing vaccines to enable immediate distribution if granted an emergency use authorization (EUA) by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Federal government, state and local health departments and health care providers have spent months planning for vaccine storage, distribution, supplies and other logistics.

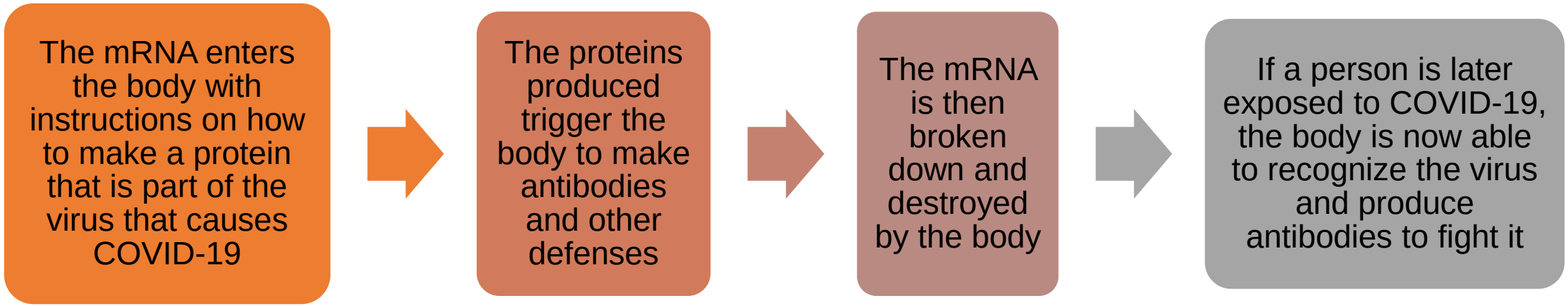
COVID-19 Vaccine

- The FDA has authorized two COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use.
- In clinical trials for both vaccines:
  - High efficacy across age, gender, race and ethnicity
  - No serious safety concerns found

Company	Mechanism	Efficacy	Storage	Doses	Age	Phase III study population	% of U.S. participants from communities of color
Pfizer-BioNTech	mRNA	95%	-70° C	2, separated by 21 days	Approved age 16+	Over 44,000	Approx. 30%
Moderna	mRNA	94%	-20° C	2, separated by 28 days	Approved age 18+	Over 30,000	Approx. 37%

mRNA Vaccine Technology

- COVID-19 messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines contain genetic material from the COVID-19 virus. mRNA vaccines do **not** contain the actual virus.
- While mRNA is a new type of vaccine, it has been studied for over 30 years.
- Here is how they work:



COVID-19 Vaccine Potential Side Effects

- Most people report some side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines, which are usually normal signs that your body is building protection.
- Common side effects are soreness or swelling on the arm where you got the shot, headache, body aches, tiredness, and fever.
- Side effects are usually mild to moderate and:
  - Usually start within the first three days after getting the shot (the day after vaccination is the most common)
  - Usually last for about one to two days after they begin
  - Are more common after the second shot
  - Are less common in older adults
- Allergic reactions have been reported but are uncommon.
  - You will be observed after vaccination to ensure safety.

Vaccination of People With Underlying Medical Conditions

- Clinical trials showed similar safety and efficacy in people with some underlying medical conditions, including some conditions that place people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness, compared to people without comorbidities.
- People in all the following groups may receive COVID-19 vaccination (unless they have a contraindication to vaccination):
  - People with weakened immune systems
  - People with autoimmune conditions
  - People with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome
  - People with a history of Bell's palsy

Limitations to Vaccination

- People do not get full protection from the vaccines until one to two weeks after the second dose.
- Like all vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccines are not 100% effective.
- Information is limited on:
  - Vaccine effectiveness in the general population
  - Extent to which vaccination reduces ability to transmit infection
  - Duration of vaccine-related immunity

COVID-19 Prevention for Vaccinated People

- Until we understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide, everyone must continue key COVID-19 prevention measures:
  - Stay home if sick
  - Wear a face covering when not at home
  - Stay at least six feet from others when outside the home
  - Practice hand hygiene

COVID-19 Vaccines and Equity

COVID-19 Vaccines and Equity

- The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYC Health Department) is ensuring that equity is at the foundation of all aspects of its COVID-19 response, including vaccine access.
- We must address the longstanding mistrust of the medical community and government due to historical and continued mistreatment of people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, and other groups, especially as New Yorkers face the decision of whether to get vaccinated.
- We must address how the vaccine will be distributed to neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
- We are committed to gaining community trust, combatting misinformation and ensuring free and easy access to the COVID-19 vaccine for all New Yorkers.

Ensuring Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

- This will be accomplished by:
  - Opening vaccine sites in communities most affected by COVID-19
  - Ensuring language-appropriate and culturally sensitive communication in outreach materials and at vaccination sites
  - Partnering with community-based organizations and community leaders
  - Listening and responding to community concerns and input
  - Providing up-to-date, accurate information about the vaccines and vaccine distribution and access, including information about what we don’t know
  - Monitoring data to identify gaps in access and enable a focused response

COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

Priority Groups and Timeline

- New York State (NYS) determines how groups are prioritized for vaccine and the timeline for distribution.
  - Plan is based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).
- The NYC Health Department is overseeing vaccine distribution for the city to ensure broad and equitable availability.

NYS Vaccine Allocation for MHy Providers: Phase 1a

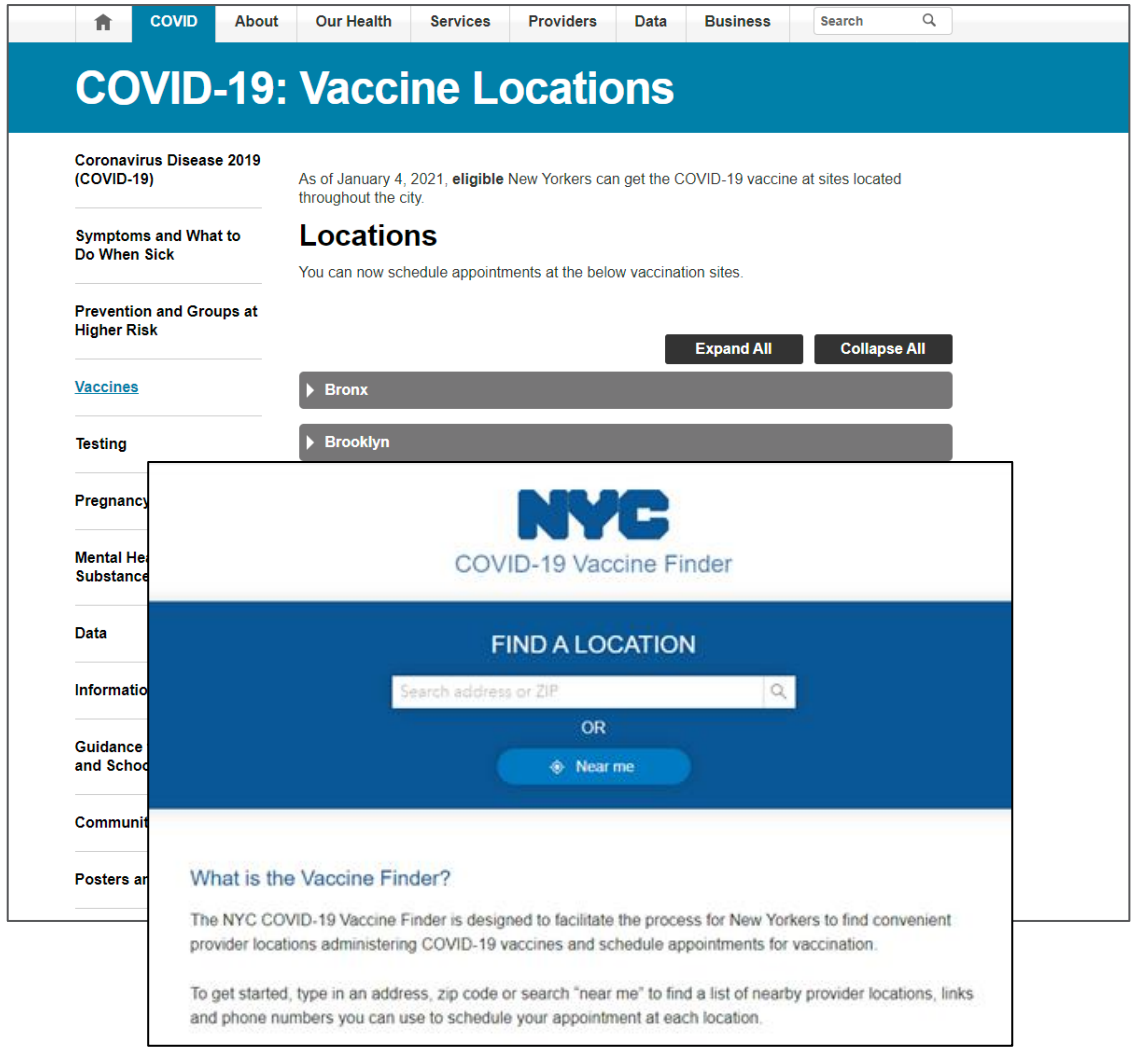
- **Residents and staff in certain group living facilities**
  - Nursing homes and other congregate care facilities
  - NYS Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS), Office of Mental Health (OMH), Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) congregate settings
- **Health care workers, such as:**
  - Outpatient/ambulatory frontline, high-risk health care workers of any age who provide direct in-person patient care, staff with direct contact with service recipients
    - This includes psychologists and psychiatrists and their staff
    - Staff and residents in NYS OASAS, OMH and OPWDD programs

NYS Vaccine Allocation: Phase 1b

- Phase 1b (starting January 11, 2021):
  - Adults ages 65 and older
  - Residents and at-risk staff in group homeless shelters and certain other facilities
  - Certain frontline essential workers, such as first responders, teachers and school staff, day care workers, transit workers, and grocery store workers
- Additional categories of essential workers may be added to Phase 1b by NYS.
- Visit **nyc.gov/covidvaccinedistribution for** a full list of all eligible groups.

Getting Vaccinated

- NYC vaccine sites for eligible groups
- **Who can be vaccinated**?
  - Currently eligible groups: nyc.gov/covidvaccinedistribution
- **Where to get vaccinated**?
  - Locations: nyc.gov/vaccinefinder



NYC Health

Vaccination Access for Mental Hygiene Providers

- Outpatient providers:
  - Schedule with an affiliated vaccination site (hospital, FQHC)
  - Schedule an online appointment if you are not affiliated with a hospital
- Congregate/residential providers:
  - Sites may have partnered with a vaccine provider or you can go online to make appointment

Preparing for a Vaccine Appointment

- Complete COVID-19 Immunization Screening and Consent form
  - Review OPWDD guidance regarding informed consent
  - Review OASAS-modified consent form
- Complete NYS COVID-19 Vaccine Form
- Bring proof of employment such as employee ID, letter from employer/affiliated organization or a pay stub.

Building COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence

Engage Staff

- Inform staff and build confidence in COVID-19 vaccination
- Provide education on the importance and safety of COVID-19 vaccination
- Give staff tools they can use to educate program participants and answer their questions
- Use or adapt CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit
- Help amplify vaccine champions or trusted messengers within your organization
- Be clear about your organization's commitment to COVID-19 vaccination as a public health effort
- As a trusted source of information on vaccines, providers play a critical role in helping program participants understand the importance of COVID-19 vaccination
- Encourage staff to share their reasons for getting vaccinated with program participants

Building Vaccine Confidence Among Mental Hygiene Program Participants

- Build trust and disseminate accurate information: “Listening sessions” to hear about concerns and needs
- Engage trusted people to educate: peers, recovery coaches, harm-reduction service providers
- Explain importance of vaccination using plain language
- Discuss what to expect before, during and after vaccination
- Address “myths” and misconceptions about vaccine — use CDC communication tips
- Encourage staff and peers to share their personal experiences and reasons for receiving vaccines (use videos, photos, buttons)
- If individual determined to lack capacity to consent, have thorough discussion with surrogate

Key Messages

- There is strong evidence that the vaccines are safe and effective!
- COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost to the individual.
- COVID-19 vaccines are available to people of all immigration statuses, and vaccination is not a public benefit under the public charge rule.
- When people receive vaccine, their privacy will be protected.
- The vaccine protects you from COVID-19, which can have serious, and even deadly, consequences (whatever your age).
- COVID-19 vaccine may protect people around you, particularly people who are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated helps move us closer to ending the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Debunking Common Vaccine Myths

- **Myth**: The vaccine was rushed, so it's probably not safe.
- **Fact:** The FDA closely monitored vaccine research and the safety and effectiveness of vaccines. Tens of thousands of people participated in clinical trials, and the vaccines were shown to be safe.

- **Myth:** The vaccines injects the virus into my body.
- **Fact:** The vaccines do not contain the virus. mRNA vaccines tell our cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response, which protects us from getting infected with COVID-19.

- **Myth**: I don't need to wear a face covering after I get vaccinated.
- **Fact:** You must continue to follow COVID-19 prevention measures after being vaccinated. The vaccine prevents people from getting sick but we still don't know if people who are vaccinated can get and transmit the virus to others. Until we understand more about how the vaccine works, people must continue to wear a face covering and practice physical distancing after being vaccinated.

Debunking Common Vaccine Myths

- **Myth**: The vaccines changes your DNA.
- **Fact**: The vaccines do **not** change your DNA. It's called an mRNA vaccine which triggers an immune response; that is what protects us from getting infected by the real virus.

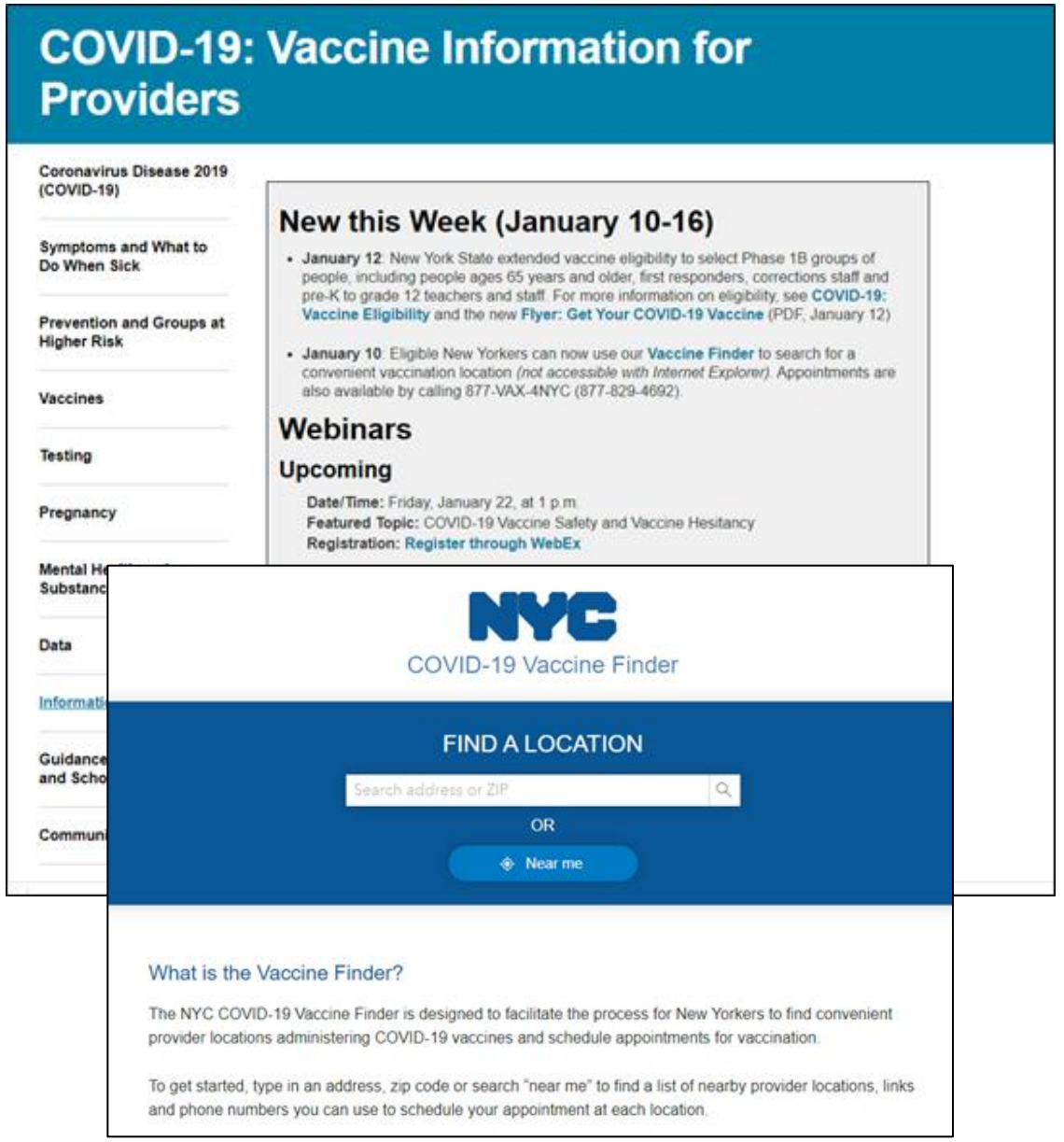
- **Myth**: The vaccines insert a microchip that will be used to track people.
- **Fact**: There is no vaccine microchip and the vaccines do not track people or get personal information.

- **Myth**: I had COVID-19 and recovered so I don't need the vaccine.
- **Fact**: Vaccine is recommended for people who had COVID-19, as it is possible to get COVID-19 again. The vaccines are safe and may boost the protection your body has already built up. However, if you tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 90 days, consider waiting to get vaccinated, since it is very unlikely that you will get COVID-19 again during this time. Talk to your health care provider if you have questions.

Resources

Resources

- **NYC Health Department - COVID-19 Vaccines**
  - Public: nyc.gov/covidvaccine
  - Providers: nyc.gov/health/covidvaccineprovider
  - **Fact sheet**: What New Yorkers need to know about COVID-19 Vaccines https://nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/covid/covid-19-vaccines-faq.pdf
- **To request a speaker for your organization**: Email ICS-Speakers-Bureau@health.nyc.gov



General COVID-19 Resources

- NYC Health Department COVID-19 Provider page: www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-providers.page
  - Register for upcoming webinars for providers
- Data page: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-data.page
- Dear Colleague COVID-19 newsletters (sign up for *City Health Information* subscription at: nyc.gov/health/register)
- NYC Health Alert Network (sign up at www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/providers/resources/health-alert-network.page)
- Provider Access Line: 866-692-3641

Thank You!

Q & A