



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc  
*Commissioner*

April 12, 2021

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for all that you have done over the past year to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency. We are now at a critical point: there continues to be ongoing community transmission of COVID-19 and we must encourage all New Yorkers to get vaccinated as soon as possible, especially those people 65 years of age and older. We need your help to do so.

**Your recommendation is one of the strongest predictors that a patient will get vaccinated.** All providers can help their patients by talking to them about vaccination and letting them know how to make and prepare for COVID-19 vaccination appointments. While appointments were initially challenging to secure, the supply of vaccine has increased and appointments are more readily available. **As of April 6, 2021, all New Yorkers ages 16 years and older who reside, work, or study in New York City are eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine.**

This letter contains information to share with your patients on how to schedule and prepare for vaccination appointments, ideas on how to encourage patients to get vaccinated, and resources and considerations on how to support informed decision-making for patients who have questions.

#### **Where to get vaccinated and making an appointment**

If you are not providing vaccination on-site or do not yet have supply to do so, encourage your patients to get vaccinated elsewhere and help them understand their options for appointments in NYC, including:

- **The City's Vaccine Finder site.** [Vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov) lists over 500 vaccination sites in NYC. People can search by ZIP code or address or use their current location. The website includes City-run sites, New York State (NYS)-run sites located in NYC, pharmacies and community providers. It also notes the type of vaccine offered at each location. Remind patients who are 16 or 17 years of age that parental consent is required and they must select a site that offers the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Let patients know that they can change the language of the portal by selecting another language in the upper left corner.
- **877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692) vaccine hotline.** The City's hotline can be used to make or change an appointment at a City-run site. The hotline offers interpretation services in over 200 languages.

- **Pharmacies.** Numerous pharmacies throughout NYC offer COVID-19 vaccine appointments. Available appointments at many NYC pharmacies are shown at [vaccinefinder.nyc.gov](https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov). Patients can also inquire at their local pharmacy to see if vaccination is being offered.
- **Reserved appointments, walk-in sites, transportation, and homebound vaccination.**
  - **Blocks of appointments have been reserved** at City-run vaccination sites for people 65 years and older and for people who live in certain ZIP codes. These appointments can be booked online ([vax4nyc.nyc.gov](https://vax4nyc.nyc.gov)) or by calling 877-VAX-4NYC. Reserved appointments will automatically appear based on the date of birth or ZIP code entered on the online form or provided to the call center operator.
  - Some sites have **walk-in vaccination services** for people 75 years and older and one accompanying companion. For a full list of City-run sites, including those with walk-up appointments available, visit [nyc.gov/vcc](https://nyc.gov/vcc) under “Find City-run Vaccine Sites in Your Borough.”
  - **Free transportation** to and from vaccination sites is available for people 65 years and older and people with disabilities. People can arrange for transportation when booking their appointment using the 877-VAX-4NYC hotline or by calling the hotline after making a booking. Transportation is available to and from any vaccination site in NYC, not just those run by the City.
  - **Homebound Vaccination Program.** The City has a program to vaccinate fully homebound New Yorkers in their homes using the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Only people who are fully homebound — that is, they cannot leave their homes even with assistance — are eligible. Interest in the program can be expressed via a form on [vax4nyc.nyc.gov](https://vax4nyc.nyc.gov) or by calling 877-VAX-4NYC. Once an interest form is submitted, patients will be contacted within several weeks for a screening, followed by a scheduling appointment if eligible.

### **Encourage your patients to make a COVID-19 vaccination appointment**

- **Reach out proactively** to your patients who are at increased risk of severe disease, especially patients 65 years and older or who have underlying health conditions. If your facility has received COVID-19 vaccine, prioritize making appointments for all your patients who are 65 years of age and older and keep a waiting list of seniors when appointments become available due to cancellations or no-shows. Vaccinating seniors is key to reducing COVID-19-related mortality.
- **Talk to your patients** about vaccination during regular patient visits, including vaccine safety and how to access the vaccine in NYC.
- **Provide handouts** such as [What New Yorkers Need to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#) and [What Older New Yorkers Need to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#). Have [posters](#) and [palm cards](#) about vaccination in your waiting room, at the front desk, and in exam rooms, in appropriate languages.

- Visit [nyc.gov/covidvaccine](https://nyc.gov/covidvaccine) for more information and resources, including flyers and fact sheets in multiple languages. You can download materials or order copies for your practice by calling **311**.
- **Alleviate patient concerns** by informing them of the following:
  - Vaccination is **provided at no cost** to them. While patients may be asked if they have insurance, insurance is not required. Insurance can be billed if people have it, but they will not be charged a co-payment or other fee.
  - COVID-19 vaccination is **provided regardless of immigration status**. Tell patients that immigration status is not asked when registering for a vaccine appointment and they do not need to provide proof of immigration status or a social security number to get vaccinated.
  - Per NYS requirements, vaccination sites **may require proof of residence** in NYS or NYC and proof of employment status if eligible based on employment category. A list of types of acceptable proof is available at [nyc.gov/covidvaccine](https://nyc.gov/covidvaccine). Documents are required to confirm eligibility only and are not used for other purposes.
  - **Interpretation services** are available at City-run vaccination sites, via in-person translators and telephone services. All City-run sites are also **ADA accessible**.

### **Support patients' questions or concerns about COVID-19 vaccines**

Some patients will have questions or concerns about COVID-19 vaccines. Encourage questions and support informed decision-making so each person can feel confident about their choice. The following are some resources to help you engage in conversations about COVID-19 vaccines:

- NYC Health Department resources:
  - [COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Providers webpage](#), section on Vaccine Communication and Encouragement
  - [Dear Colleague: Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination](#)
  - [Vaccine Facts webpage](#), which contains detailed information about the vaccines that may be helpful in responding to patients' questions
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Vaccination Communication Toolkit for Clinicians and Staff](#)
- **Watch and share** [The Conversation: Between Us, About Us](#), in which Black health care professionals and researchers have open conversations and provide information about COVID-19 vaccines.

The NYC Health Department will continue to share information as it becomes available. For updates, check the COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Providers webpage: [nyc.gov/health/covidvaccineprovider](https://nyc.gov/health/covidvaccineprovider).

Thank you for your continued partnership throughout the City's COVID-19 vaccine campaign.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. Quinn', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

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