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**Provider Alert
10/22/2021**

MedStar Family Choice (MFC) would like to share important and helpful information for our Baltimore City network providers.

Did you know the Baltimore City Health Department has set up a Pfizer Vaccine Distribution Program?

For those interested in helping fight the COVID pandemic but have resource constraints for storing the vaccine or do not have enough volume to support directly ordering from ImmuNet, the Baltimore City Health Department would like to partner with your office through this innovative program.

Attached you will find an overview of the Baltimore City Health Department's Pfizer Distribution Program as well as the COVID-19 Vaccine Transfer Policy. Both attached files explain how to access the COVID-19 vaccines to administer out of your office through Baltimore City Health Department.

Given we are on the brink of another large population that may have emergency FDA approval for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine (ages 5-11), please review these resources made available to you by the Baltimore City Health Department. We need all the help we can get as we continue to fight this pandemic.

**It's how we
treat people.**

COVID-19 Vaccine Transfer Policy

Version 3 – September 2021

In recognition that COVID-19 vaccine may need to be transferred from Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) to healthcare providers for mass administration, this policy outlines the operational steps for completing vaccine transfers.

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) releases updated guidance for the transfer of COVID-19 vaccine via periodic [vaccine bulletins](#). In accordance with these guidelines, BCHD must record and report data to MDH on all vaccine transfers, including type of vaccine, number of doses transferred, date of transfer, and the receiving providers.

Per MDH guidance, providers who receive COVID vaccine from BCHD must:

- Agree to administer first doses of vaccine, and as needed, return and/or schedule appointments to administer second doses of vaccine within the appropriate timeframe.
- Agree to report all vaccine doses administered in the ImmuNet system.

Providers will also be required to:

- Submit BCHD [Vaccine Transfer Request Forms](#) for each allocation of vaccine.
- Sign a Vaccine Receipt to document chain of custody for completed transfers.
- Provide biweekly reports to BCHD on amount of vaccine administered, and unused quantity remaining in inventory (BCHD transferred doses only).

Vaccine Transfers: Request and Approval

Providers who are interested in obtaining COVID-19 vaccine from BCHD may place a request in one of the following ways:

- Mobile Response Team (MRT) clinical partners: request through designated BCHD MRT program liaison or via BCHD's electronic COVID-19 Vaccine Transfer Request Form.
- VALUE Communities clinical partners: request through designated BCHD program lead.
- Pediatric Providers: submit request via BCHD's electronic COVID-19 Vaccine Transfer Request Form.

MRT and VALUE Communities program leads will work directly with clinical partners to coordinate and schedule community vaccination events and determine the appropriate quantity of vaccine needed.



The BCHD COVAX Logistics Lead (or designee) will approve all transfer requests and determine the amount to be transferred. Transfers will generally take place on a weekly or biweekly basis, subject to vaccine availability. Requests that cannot be met in a given week may be considered in future weeks.

When a transfer request is approved, the COVAX Logistics Lead (or designee) will:

- Notify clinical partners of the approval status of their requests.
- Log the pending transfer in the BCHD Vaccine Transfers Tracker spreadsheet, entering the appropriate information from the request form.
- Notify the Vaccine Distribution Coordinator and Immunization Director when transfers are ready for scheduling.

Vaccine Transfer Scheduling/Pick-Up

The BCHD Vaccine Distribution Coordinator will arrange the actual vaccine transfer by reaching out to each clinical partner's identified points of contact. All partners are expected to pick up the vaccine and transport it, maintaining appropriate cold chain for the vaccine at all times per CDC and MDH guidelines.

- Before the requested pick-up, the Vaccine Distribution Coordinator will contact the clinical partner to reconfirm the pick-up time, location, and number of doses.
- Upon pick-up, the clinical partner or courier will be required to sign a Vaccine Transfer Receipt (see attached) documenting vaccine type, lot number, and number of doses transferred. BCHD will keep one copy; the other copy will go to the clinical partner.
- The Vaccine Distribution Coordinator will notify the Logistics Lead (or designee) when each transfer is completed.
- COVAX Logistics Lead (or designee) will report all completed transfers to MDH via their online [Transfer Form](#) within 24 hours after the transfer. [Note: internal transfers between BCHD programs are not reported to MDH.]

Second/Additional Doses

Clinical partners will be responsible for tracking the need for second doses and requesting adequate vaccine as needed.

Reporting of Vaccine Utilization

Every facility/organization that accepts a transfer of COVID-19 vaccine from BCHD must adhere to the following reporting requirements. BCHD reserves the right to request the return of any unused vaccine.

- Report to BCHD the number of doses administered and remaining supply of any vaccine dispensed to the facility by BCHD. (See attached BCHD Vaccine Transfer Utilization Report.)
 - Reports are due on Fridays starting one week after the initial vaccine transfer, and should continue biweekly until the full allocation of vaccine has been administered.
- Report all vaccine wastage and temperature excursions to MDH at www.marylandvfc.org.

Guidance on Vaccine Wastage

Clinical partners receiving COVID-19 vaccine from BCHD should endeavor to maximize vaccination and minimize vaccine wastage to the greatest extent possible. To ensure providers do not miss an opportunity to vaccinate every eligible person, BCHD recommends that following CDC recommendations as outlined below:

- Follow clinical best practices, both for vaccination and for inventory management, in order to maximize administration of vaccine and minimize vaccine wastage.
- Providers should not miss any opportunities to vaccinate every eligible person who presents at a vaccination site, even if it means puncturing a multidose vial to administer vaccine without having enough people available to receive each dose.
- Consider establishing and promoting standing vaccination days or half-days to increase the likelihood of larger numbers of people presenting for vaccination on the same day.
- Vaccinate family members or friends who accompany patients to medical visits, even if they are not established patients at the vaccinating practice.
- Conduct outreach to employers and community partners with a large workforce or membership to arrange vaccination events.
- As a contingency plan, vaccine providers should attempt to contact additional persons (i.e., from a waitlist or through personal contacts of persons being vaccinated) in order to use as many vaccine doses as possible.

If BCHD determines that a partner is not adhering to this policy, BCHD will investigate and that partner may become ineligible to receive future transfers of COVID-19 vaccine from BCHD.

Attachment A: Vaccine Transfer Receipt

Attachment B: Transfer Partners Vaccine Utilization Report



Baltimore City Health Department
COMIRNATY/Pfizer-BioNTech
Vaccine Distribution Program for
Provider Offices (VDP-PO)

Launched September 2021

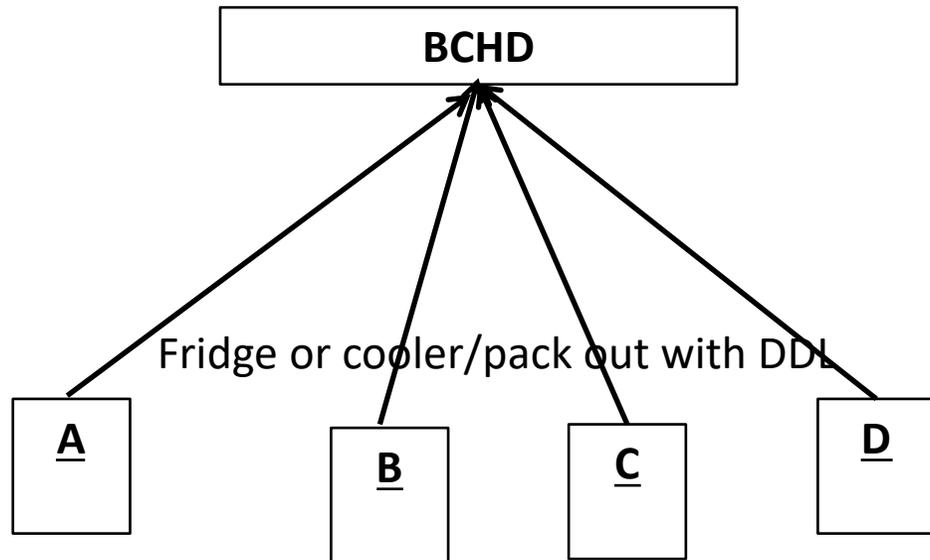
Many families would prefer to have their children vaccinated against COVID at their usual doctor's office. The eligible age for vaccination with the COMIRNATY/Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine may decrease within the next few weeks or months. Provider offices in Baltimore City have been challenged by the large number of doses of vaccine in each shipment, and the storage requirements of the vaccine.

The purpose of BCHD's COMIRNATY/Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine Distribution Program for Provider Offices (VDP-PO) is to make smaller allotments of the vaccine accessible to provider offices in Baltimore City, and to eliminate the need for providers to acquire ultra-cold freezers.

The following slides describe the Program. If your office is interested in participating, please complete the [Registration Survey](#).

Thank you!

VDP-PO logistical map: Providers place transfer requests and collect vaccine from BCHD



- Provider Offices place transfer requests to the VDP-PO Coordinator at BCHD every two weeks via an electronic order form. Providers collect the vaccines from BCHD one week after the order was placed. BCHD is not able to deliver vaccines to Provider Offices.
- Vaccine may be distributed by BCHD frozen or refrigerated
- Provider Offices will need the following materials: vaccine transport equipment; DDL to monitor the integrity of the cold chain; a vaccine refrigerator in their office; a vehicle; and personnel to place transfer requests, collect vaccine from BCHD, administer the vaccine, and report vaccine inventory

EXAMPLE

September 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

www.a-printable-calendar.com



Provider Offices submit transfer requests to BCHD every two weeks



Provider Offices collect vaccine transfers from BCHD at 1200 E Fayette St every two weeks

How to Request Transfer of COMIRNATY Vaccine from BCHD

- Provider Offices will receive a Vaccine Transfer Request Form via email.
- Transfer requests will be accepted every two weeks
- Provider Office points of contact should order the total number of doses needed for the next two-week period (consider all 1st doses, 2nd doses, and any booster doses).

There are currently 6 doses per vial of COMIRNATY/Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

Collecting the Vaccine from BCHD

- One week after a Provider Office places a transfer request, a representative from that Provider Office will pick up their vaccine vials and ancillary supplies (diluent, syringes, sterile alcohol prep pads, and CDC vaccination record cards) from the Baltimore City Health Department (1200 E Fayette St Baltimore MD)
- When Provider Office representatives collect their allotment of vaccines, they will also complete a Transfer Receipt and the transfer will be documented in ImmuNet
- Provider Office representatives will be responsible for packing their vaccine vials into their coolers
- BCHD is not able to deliver vaccines to Provider Offices

Transporting COMIRNATY Vaccine

- *Each Provider Office is responsible for securing qualified vaccine transport equipment and for appropriately maintaining the integrity of the cold chain.*
- Some of the equipment provider offices will need for transport:
 - Transport refrigerator OR qualified transport container and pack out
 - A temperature measuring device or digital data logger (DDL)
 - A log of vaccine temperatures during transport ([example](#) from CDC website)
- **Review the [CDC Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit](#) (March 4 2021) and the [USP Vaccine Handling Toolkit](#) (June 2021)**

Vaccine Transport Containers and Pack Out

- “Qualified container and pack out”: A container and supplies specifically designed for use when packing vaccines for transport. Pack out is “qualified” through laboratory testing under controlled conditions to ensure it can achieve and maintain desired temperatures for a set amount of time.
- Commercially available soft-sided food coolers are often poorly insulated and are likely to be affected by room or outdoor temperatures, but may preserve the cold chain during brief travel
- **Review the CDC’s [Storage and Handling Summary](#)**

BCHD does not endorse specific products. Examples can be found on the web.

Digital Data Loggers

- A digital data logger (DDL) should be used to monitor the temperature of the vaccine during transport and in its final storage location.
- Place the probe near the vaccine vials. A DDL with an external readout that can read minimum and maximum (min/max) temperatures is preferred.
- **Review the CDC's [Storage and Handling Summary](#)**

BCHD does not endorse specific products. Examples can be found on the web.

Storing the Vaccine

- **Review the CDC's [Storage and Handling Summary](#)**

Some key points:

- No exposure to light
 - Vials must be stored upright
 - Before mixing, the vaccine may be stored in the freezer between -25°C and -15°C (-13°F to 5°F) for up to **2 weeks**.
 - Before mixing, the vaccine may be stored in the refrigerator between 2°C and 8°C (36°F and 46°F) for up to **31 days**.
 - Vials can be in a vaccine freezer for 2 weeks and then moved to a fridge for 31 additional days.
 - DO NOT re-freeze refrigerated vaccine. Frozen vaccine can be moved back to an ultra-low temperature freezer one time.
- **Review the CDC's [COVID-19 Vaccine Inventory Management Best Practices](#)**
 - Vaccine information from the [Pfizer website](#)

Paperwork for COVID-19 Vaccination Visits

- [CDC Pre-Vaccination Checklist for COVID-19 Vaccines \(screening form\)](#)
- COVID-19 vaccine Consent Form
- Complete a CDC COVID vaccination card for each patient (included among the ancillary materials provided by BCHD)
- Encourage your patients to participate in [V-safe](#), the CDC's after vaccination health checker. Patients can use their smartphone to tell CDC about any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. V-safe also sends reminders about getting a second vaccine dose.

Reporting Requirements for Provider Offices

- Provider offices are responsible for reporting their vaccine inventory directly to ImmuNet. There are multiple how-to guides on the [ImmuNet](#) website, including the following:
 - [COVID-19 Vaccine Registration Guide](#) (Report vaccine inventory in ImmuNet)
 - [Manage Vaccine Inventory Guide](#) (Modify vaccine inventory in ImmuNet)
- CDC [COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement Requirements](#)
- Healthcare providers are **required** to report adverse events after COVID-19 vaccination, to the [Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#), under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)



Requirements to Participate in this VDP-PO

- **IMPORTANT: Provider Offices must be registered with ImmuNet to provide COVID vaccines. See [ImmuNet Quick Reference Guides](#) for instructions on how to register**
- Provider Offices ([whether registered with VFC or not](#)) are responsible for adhering to all requirements as per the [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement](#), including:
 - Storing and handling COVID-19 vaccines under proper conditions, including maintaining cold chain conditions and chain of custody at all times in accordance with an EUA or vaccine package insert, manufacturer guidance, and CDC guidance.
 - Monitoring storage unit temperatures at all times, using equipment and practices that comply with CDC guidance.
 - Complying with immunization program guidance for handling temperature excursions.
 - Monitoring and complying with COVID-19 vaccine expiration dates.
 - Preserving all records related to COVID-19 vaccine management for a minimum of three years.
 - Complying with federal instructions and timelines for disposing of COVID-19 vaccine and diluent, including unused doses.
- Adhere to all [reporting requirements as per CDC guidelines](#)

COVID-19 Vaccine and Participation in this Program is Free (no subscription)

CDC states that all organizations and providers participating in the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program (verbatim):

- **must** administer COVID-19 Vaccine at no out-of-pocket cost to the recipient
- may **not** deny anyone vaccination based on the vaccine recipient's coverage status or network status
- may **not** charge an office visit or other fee if COVID-19 vaccination is the sole medical service provided
- may **not** require additional medical services to receive COVID-19 vaccination
- **may** seek appropriate reimbursement from a program or plan that covers COVID-19 Vaccine administration fees for the vaccine recipient, such as:
 - vaccine recipient's private insurance company
 - Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement
 - HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Program for non-insured vaccine recipients
- may **not** seek any reimbursement, including through balance billing, from the vaccine recipient
- Individuals aware of any potential violations of these requirements are encouraged to report them to the Office of the Inspector General, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, by calling 1-800-HHS-TIPS or the website [TIPS.HHS.GOV](https://www.tips.hhs.gov)

For more information see [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Requirements and Support](#)

How to Discontinue Participation in this Vaccine Distribution Program

Providers are NOT required to place transfer requests for COMIRNATY/Pfizer-BioNTech in each transfer cycle, and may decide to discontinue participation in the program at any time.

Please be sure to communicate with BCHD if you encounter any problems while participating in the Program.

Resources for Training and Educating Provider Office Staff

- Review the CDC's [Training requirements, recommendations, and resources](#)
- Review the CDC's [online modules to train staff administering COVID-19 vaccines](#)
- Kim Grady, MSN, RN is Training Coordinator/Educator for BCHD. She is available to provide on-site or remote education regarding Covid-19 and vaccination. kim.grady@baltimorecity.gov



Image source: www.cdc.gov

Questions about this program?

- Providers may direct questions about BCHD's Vaccine Distribution Program to Bea Shikani MD MHS (bea.shikani@baltimorecity.gov), Kay Webster (kay.webster@baltimorecity.gov), or Asuseyi Daniyan (asuseyi.daniyan@baltimorecity.gov)
- Questions for ImmuNet, about receiving vaccine directly from them?
 - Email: mdh.mdimmunet@maryland.gov
 - Help line: 410-767-0795 (Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, except State Holidays)
 - Directory of [ImmuNet help desks](#)

Other Resources From BCHD

Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) Provider Newsletter

- [Sign up](#) for the twice-monthly BCHD provider newsletter
- [View past newsletters](#)

Review the [COVID-19 Vaccine Resource Guide for Health Care Providers in Baltimore City](#) - *educational materials from this Guide are planned to be printed and delivered to Provider Offices in the City at no cost in the next few weeks*