

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs

MedChi staff is receiving daily inquiries from physicians seeking to understand the latest COVID-19 vaccine information. The news seems to change daily, and there are still a lot of unknown elements of the statewide deployment campaign. We are pleased to be here to answer your specific questions, and I thought it might be helpful for you to see some basics about Maryland's COVID-19 vaccine plan.

So, what exactly IS Maryland's vaccine plan?

In October, Maryland submitted a [68-page draft plan](#) to the CDC. Don't worry, you don't have to read the entire thing. That's why MedChi is here: to help you understand what matters to you and your medical practice.

Ok, so what do I need to know?

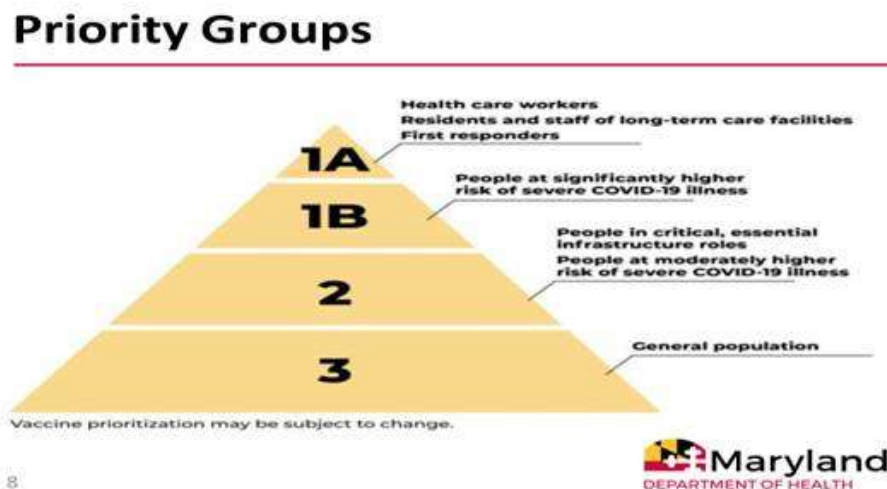
First, you need to know that Howard Haft, Director of the Maryland Primary Care Program, is holding regular update webinars on Mondays (5:30-6) and Wednesdays (5:00-6:00). Dr. Haft has permitted MedChi to invite any physician to attend, so you don't have to be a primary care program participant or even a primary care physician. We've also accredited each call for CME credit at no cost to the attendees. You can find the schedule for future calls and recordings from past calls by [scrolling to the bottom of this web page](#).

Second, MDH has shared some [clinical information about the vaccines](#).

Third, you need to know some of the vaccine plan basics.

Cool. So...what ARE the basics?

1. Maryland's vaccine distribution plan is structured into the phases outlined below:



2. MDH has launched a [public information page on the vaccine](#).
3. The [FDA is providing updates](#) on COVID-19 vaccine development and authorization.
4. UMMS is holding a call tomorrow, December 22, at 6:00 pm to update community providers on the vaccination plan. [Register here](#).

I want to administer the vaccine to my patients. What do I need to know?

1. Private practice physicians who wish to administer the vaccine in their practice need to [enroll in Immunet](#), Maryland vaccines reporting system.
2. Hospital-based physicians can expect to receive the vaccine through their hospital system.
3. Nursing home and long-term care physicians will access vaccines does via CVS and Walgreens; work with your facility on the logistics for this.
4. Community health physicians will receive vaccines from MDH.
5. Vaccines will be provided at no cost to the provider and should be administered at no cost to the patient. CMS has developed [coding and billing guidelines](#) for administrative costs related to the vaccine.
6. Side effects are minimal and typical to most flu vaccines, but there are contraindications for individuals who have a history of anaphylactic reactions to any of the vaccine components.

What else can I do to ensure my patients stay healthy?

1. Identify your high-risk patients and provide these vulnerable individuals with telehealth or other special accommodations to ensure that they can minimize their exposure.
2. Offer testing for all patients, every visit.
3. When it comes to vaccine guidance, studies have shown that patients place the most trust in their personal physicians. This means that you will play a major role in ensuring that your patients receive the vaccine as deployment efforts broaden. Please encourage your patients to get vaccinated and consider sharing your own vaccination video or photo with them. [The AMA has developed a toolkit to help physicians encourage vaccinations for their patients.](#)
4. Develop a strategy for ensuring that your patients return for the second dose of the vaccine.
5. Continue to protect yourself to every extent possible with social distancing, mask wearing, and hand washing.

How can I stay updated on the latest developments?

1. Register for MDH's regular COVID-19 update calls. The next calls are scheduled for [Monday, December 28](#) and [Wednesday, December 30](#).
2. Read MedChi's [weekly COVID-19 email update](#). (If you are not already getting this email, please let us know.)

I hope you will continue to turn to MedChi as a trusted source of the latest information on COVID-19 vaccines and related news. MedChi member (and our Public Health Committee Chair) Richard Bruno, MD, is serving on the state's vaccine advisory council, and we are pleased to have a direct conduit to the latest and most accurate information in this confusing time. We are here to serve as your resource through this ongoing challenge.

Gene M. Ransom III
CEO MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society