

Ensuring Access to COVID-19 Vaccine in Long-Term Care Facilities

Long-term care facilities (LTCFs) provide a range of services, including medical and personal care, to adults who are unable to live independently. These types of facilities include, but are not limited to, skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other congregate living settings where most people receiving care/supervision are older than 65 years of age. The communal nature of LTCFs and the population served (generally older adults often with underlying medical conditions) puts facility residents at increased risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection and severe illness from COVID-19.

The [Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care \(LTC\) Program](#) is facilitating on-site vaccination of residents and staff at more than 70,000 enrolled LTCFs. Pharmacy partners participating in the program are conducting three on-site vaccination clinics for every enrolled facility. Most clinics provided by this program will likely be completed by the end of March 2021. As the Pharmacy Partnership for LTC program comes to an end, it is important to ensure LTCFs have continued access to COVID-19 vaccine for new or unvaccinated residents and staff.

Ways for Long-term Care Facilities to Continue Receiving COVID-19 Vaccine

LTCF administrators and clinical leadership should consider the following options when making COVID-19 vaccination plans for their facilities.

- **LTCFs can receive COVID-19 vaccine from a long-term care (LTC) pharmacy* that is enrolled as a COVID-19 vaccine provider through the [Federal Retail Pharmacy Program for COVID-19 Vaccination](#).**
 - The federal government has launched the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, a collaboration between the federal government, states and territories, and 21 national pharmacy partners and independent pharmacy networks representing over 40,000 pharmacies nationwide, including LTC pharmacy locations. In the initial phases of the program, pharmacy partners participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program are receiving limited vaccine allocations from the federal government to distribute to their locations in select states and territories.
 - Facilities may coordinate directly with participating LTC pharmacies to get access to vaccines and plan vaccination clinics. A list of pharmacy partners participating in the federal program is available [here](#).
- **LTCFs can receive COVID-19 vaccine from an LTC pharmacy that is enrolled as a COVID-19 vaccine provider with their state or territory.**
 - LTCF staff should contact their facility's current LTC pharmacy to check if they are enrolled to provide COVID-19 vaccine through their state or territory.
 - LTC pharmacies that are not enrolled to provide COVID-19 vaccine with their state or territory or through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program can visit their [state immunization program](#) website to explore options for becoming a COVID-19 vaccine provider.
- **LTCFs can receive COVID-19 vaccine by enrolling directly with their state or territory as a COVID-19 vaccine provider.** The LTCF would be responsible for vaccine ordering, storage, handling, and administration. Facilities would also be responsible for reporting supply and vaccine administration information to their state. The COVID-19 vaccination provider enrollment process differs by state. Facilities should contact their [state immunization program](#) for more information.

Next Steps for Long-Term Care Facilities

1. Initiate a discussion with your existing LTC pharmacy to better understand your options. If the pharmacy is set up to receive COVID-19 vaccine through the federal government or through your state, the pharmacy can administer vaccine to your residents and staff.

2. Find an alternate pharmacy if your existing LTC pharmacy is not a federal or state COVID-19 vaccination partner. Visit [the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program website](#) to see which pharmacies are participating. You can also contact your [state health department](#) to find additional providers in your area.
3. Lastly, some states may enroll LTCFs and allow them to order COVID-19 vaccine directly to administer to their residents and staff. This decision is state-dependent, and facilities should work directly with their [state immunization program](#) if this option is desired.

***An LTC pharmacy is a specialized pharmacy that is designed specifically to support people living in an LTC community.** Some LTC pharmacies enrolled as COVID-19 vaccine providers, either through the federal program or their state or territory, may not have enough staff to administer vaccines onsite at the facility. LTCF staff should not administer the vaccine on behalf of the pharmacy unless the LTCF is also enrolled as a COVID-19 vaccine provider with their state or territory. However, LTC pharmacies participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program are permitted by their COVID-19 vaccination provider agreements to subcontract staff and, through this process, could use facility staff for vaccine administration.