

## Reimbursement & Policy

### Second vaccine nears approval

This week, the FDA issued the [briefing document](#) and verified the safety and efficacy data for the Moderna vaccine. Like last week's process with the Pfizer vaccine, the Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) met today and voted in favor of issuing an EUA for the vaccine. The vote was 20 in favor with one abstaining.

Next, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) will meet December 19-20 to discuss the vaccine. Should they also support an EUA, the vaccine could begin being distributed soon. Unlike Pfizer which has a number of production facilities, Moderna is partnering with other companies to scale up operations to produce the 200 million doses it is contracted to provide to the federal government by June.

The Moderna vaccine requires two doses, 28 days apart. Similar to Pfizer's vaccine, Moderna's uses messenger RNA to teach the body to produce copies of the spike protein found on the exterior of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. In turn, these proteins teach the immune system to recognize and attack the virus. During Phase 3 clinical trials for this vaccine, 30,000 participants were enrolled.

In other vaccine news, Idaho's Vaccine Advisory Committee will [meet](#) tomorrow to continue planning the rollout of vaccines and prioritizing when various groups will receive the vaccines. The virtual meeting begins at 12p MTN and can be accessed [here](#).

It was announced today that Idaho, like many other states, will receive a smaller shipment of the Pfizer vaccine next week. The shipment has been reduced from 17,550 doses to 9,750 per IDHW.

### Potential for additional doses in Pfizer vaccine vials

The FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research Prevention has [addressed new information](#) that shipped vials of Pfizer's BND162b2 mRNA COVID-19 vaccine contain extra doses, indicating that it is acceptable to use every full dose obtainable from each vial. While the EUA authorizes five doses per vial, it has been noted there is potential for a sixth or seventh dose from each vial. The remaining liquid in a vial must be enough for a full dose.

### More detail added to IRTS SNAP reporting

The Idaho Resource Tracking System (IRTS) has added an additional level of detail for the Surge Needs Assessment for the Pandemic (SNAP) Indicators to better identify issues impacting hospital capacity. The SNAP Indicators include:

- Full Care as Normal
- Some Stresses
- Many Resource Limitations
- Severe Constraints
- Operating Under CSC

The additional status reasons may identify some of the constraints hospitals are experiencing related to capacity and allows for the categorization of some barriers to load-leveling to mitigate capacity and surge. It is hoped that identifying the specificity of these barriers may allow for remediation before reaching the need for Crisis Standards of Care.

Users can select one or more specific barriers for all SNAP indicators, except Full Care as Normal. In addition to the specific barriers, hospitals also have the option to enter narrative outlining their situation. The status reasons include:

- Other: Please provide comments to explain.
- Unable to Discharge A: COVID patients who no longer need hospital-level of care but do need SNF/LTAC level of care due to unavailable beds at LTC/LTAC.
- Unable to Discharge B: COVID patients who no longer need hospital-level of care but do need SNF/LTAC level of care due to delay in insurance authorization for transfer to SNF/LTAC.
- Unable to Transfer A: COVID patients to another inpatient hospital due to hospital capacity issue at receiving hospitals.
- Unable to Transfer B: COVID patients to another location due to the unavailability of EMS transport.

### Additional provider relief funding

This week, [HHS announced](#) it will distribute an additional \$24.5 billion in relief funding for eligible hospitals and other providers.

To be eligible for this phase, hospitals must have applied for the payments which focus on those facilities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, including rural and other facilities serving vulnerable communities. Financial losses and changes in operating expenses were taken into account by HHS when determining if payment would be made.

According to the [HHS information](#), 180 providers in Idaho have received or will receive a payment in this phase. Additional data will be provided throughout January as the applications continue to be reviewed.

## December Named for Healthcare Workers

Governor Brad Little has proclaimed December to be "Health Care Worker Appreciation Month" in Idaho

"I ask all Idahoans to share their gratitude for health care heroes in Idaho," Governor Little said. "We can show our gratitude by minimizing transmissible moments this holiday season. Wear a mask, avoid gatherings with people outside your household, continue to keep safe physical distance, and wash your hands regularly. As individuals, we must choose to do all we can to combat COVID-19 in order to relieve pressure on Idaho's health care workers."

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Little noted Idaho's health care workers have exemplified what it means to be heroic. Workers at Idaho's hospitals and long-term care facilities put the safety and wellbeing of the patients and residents in their charge ahead of their own health. Staff are also trying to meet social and emotional needs of patients because many families are still unable to visit their loved ones.

## Quality & Patient Safety

### Healthcare workers encouraged to share vaccine stories

This week, the AHA joined the American Medical Association and American Nurses Association in thanking healthcare workers for their sacrifices and dedication during this unprecedented healthcare crisis. With vaccines now being given to healthcare workers throughout the US and Idaho, the associations [joined voices](#) to encourage healthcare workers to share their vaccine experiences. "As frontline caregivers, our essential role in protecting the health and wellbeing of our communities goes beyond the care we provide," the letter notes. "As a valued and trusted voice, our example is perhaps the strongest health resource we have."

## Virtual Meetings & Education

### Webinar: What Clinicians Need to Know About the Vaccines

This COCA Call will give clinicians an overview of the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines. Clinicians will learn about vaccine characteristics and administration, vaccinating special populations, and contraindications. They will also get answers to a number of clinical questions CDC has received about these new vaccines

**What Clinicians Need to Know About the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines**

Friday, December 18 ~ 12p MTN / 11a PAC

[Zoom Access](#)

Webinar ID: 160.681.6862 Code: 105116

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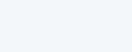
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