

Vaccine supply delivery delays

Providers were notified this week about shipping delays due to winter weather conditions throughout much of the country. The Department of Health and Welfare, in an email to providers, reported Moderna vaccines were not shipped on Monday or Tuesday this week, while Pfizer vaccines were not shipped on Monday but a limited shipment was planned for Tuesday.

In other vaccine news, the Biden Administration announced an increase in the weekly allocation to states of approximately two million doses, for a weekly total of 13.5 million doses. The distribution to pharmacies was also increased to two million doses per week.

Reimbursement & Policy

CDC updates vaccine-related guidance

As vaccinations progress, the CDC has issued or revised guidance for those who've been fully vaccinated. For providers who are administering vaccines to homebound persons – i.e. those who need help or medical equipment to leave their house, do not leave their home, or those whose health could get worse if they do – **new recommendations** are in place. The vaccine **storage and handling toolkit** provides the information needed for providers to safely transport vaccine for administration in homes or other off-site facilities.

The CDC also changed the **quarantine recommendations** for those individuals fully vaccinated for at least two weeks but no more than three months. Provided they do not show symptoms, those individuals do not need to quarantine after exposure to someone with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. Regarding healthcare personnel and vaccinated inpatients, the CDC says,

These criteria could also be applied when considering work restrictions for fully vaccinated healthcare personnel with higher-risk exposures, as a strategy to alleviate staffing shortages. Of note, exposed healthcare personnel would not be required to quarantine outside of work.

As an exception to the above guidance no longer requiring quarantine for fully vaccinated persons, vaccinated inpatients and residents in healthcare settings should continue to quarantine following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19; outpatients should be cared for using appropriate Transmission-Based Precautions. This exception is due to the unknown vaccine effectiveness in this population, the higher risk of severe disease and death, and challenges with social distancing in healthcare settings. Although not preferred, healthcare facilities could consider waiving quarantine for vaccinated patients and residents as a strategy to mitigate critical issues (e.g., lack of space, staff, or PPE to safely care for exposed patients or residents) when other options are unsuccessful or unavailable. These decisions could be made in consultation with public health officials and infection control experts.

Quality & Patient Safety

Variants present in Southern Idaho

Yesterday, it was announced that low levels of the UK (B.1.1.7) and California variants were detected in wastewater tests from the Treasure Valley. The samples, from Boise, Eagle, and Garden City were submitted in late January as part of the ongoing wastewater sampling and testing process.

When noting the presence of the variants, Dr. Christopher Ball, Bureau Chief for the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories **said**, "While we haven't detected the B.1.1.7 (U.K.) or the CAL.20C variants in clinical samples yet, we have presumed the variants were circulating in Idaho. We are grateful to the City of Boise for doing this important work. The Idaho Bureau of Laboratories is on track to sequence SARS-CoV-2 samples in-house by the end of the month, which will both speed up the time to results and expand the number of samples in our strain sequencing program. In the interim, we continue to work with clinical labs around the state to receive samples for sequencing. Several partners including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regional universities, and commercial reference labs are sequencing Idaho samples. To date, 239 Idaho SARS-CoV2 sequencing samples have been characterized in public databases. We look forward to having more robust and local sequencing capabilities in the coming weeks."

Vaccine guidance updates

The CDC posted updated **clinical considerations** for the use of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. Included in the updates are new recommendations for preventing, reporting, and managing administration errors as well as contraindications and precautions.

Resources & Equipment

Counterfeit N95s identified

3M Corporation has identified N95 mask lot numbers that may potentially be counterfeit products. The codes, below, are legitimate lot numbers used by 3M; however, if found on any inventory, should be reported. The lot codes can be found on both the individual masks as well as the boxes they were shipped in. Should you find these lot numbers in your inventory, please contact 3M at 800.426.8688.

B19029	B19206	B19240	B19130	B19133
B19155	B19161	B19206	B19314	B20010
B20013	B20016	B20018	B20019	B20020
B20021	B20022	B20025	B20060	B20245
R20025	R20102	R20144	R20150	R20294

Virtual Meetings & Education

Webinar ~ Building vaccination confidence

The AHA Living Learning Network will present a Fireside Chat on Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccinations. During this session, participants will communicate with experts on best practices, challenges, and lessons learned on vaccinating with confidence through building trust, empowering health care personnel, and engaging communities and individuals.

Fireside Chat on Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccinations

Thursday, February 25 ~ 9a MTN / 8a PAC

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