

PA UNITES AGAINST COVID

VACCINE OUTREACH TOOLKIT FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES



COVID-PUB-VOHC-EN



LETTER FROM THE PHYSICIAN GENERAL

Dear Fellow Pennsylvanians,

The COVID-19 pandemic has been tough. But Pennsylvania's health care professionals have proven that together, we are tougher. You've been on the frontlines, battling the virus for over a year. You've felt the worst of the impacts, but you're still in the fight. We've had many victories against the virus, but we're not done yet.

To protect SNF residents, staff, and the community, the PA Department of Health has set an expectation that all of Pennsylvania's Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) will have at least **80% of staff vaccinated by October 1, 2021**. As of September 26, 2021, only 23.2% of facilities in Pennsylvania have met or exceeded the Department of Health's expectation. We need your help to close the gap.

COVID-19 vaccines are new, and many of our health care workers have questions. And that's a good thing. There is so much information—and misinformation—out there about vaccines. It can be overwhelming and difficult to find unbiased facts. That's why we've created this **Vaccine Outreach Toolkit for Health Care Providers**. Good facts lead to good decisions. This toolkit has three main sections:

- A guide to having supportive discussions with those who are vaccine hesitant
- What you should know about vaccines to have effective conversations
- Marketing materials you can use for outreach efforts

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. They're our best chance to beat the virus. Every person who chooses to get vaccinated brings us a step closer to moving past the pandemic.

As a trusted member of your community, your voice matters. Health care workers have a high-level of influence on others when it comes to vaccines. In Pennsylvania, we have millions of friends, family members, and neighbors who are unvaccinated. The conversation they have with you could be the deciding factor that convinces them to get their COVID-19 vaccine.

You have the power to finish this. Together, we can defeat COVID.

Thank you for doing your part. United, I know we can finish this.

Sincerely,

Dr. Denise Johnson
Acting Physician General of Pennsylvania

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TALKING ABOUT VACCINES

How to Approach Conversations with Those that are Vaccine Hesitant

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and giving us a path back to our lives. Every Pennsylvanian who chooses to get vaccinated brings us a step closer to moving past the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, we can defeat the virus.

Many of us have friends and family who are hesitant to get the vaccine. Here are some ideas for how to talk to loved ones about their concerns in a safe and supportive way.

Listen with empathy

COVID-19 vaccines are new, and it's normal for people to have questions about them. There is so much information—and misinformation—about COVID-19 vaccines and it can be overwhelming. You can help by listening without judgement and identifying the root of their concerns.

Acknowledge their emotions so they know they have been heard. For example, you can say, "It sounds like you are stressed at work and home, and concerns about the vaccine are another source of stress. That's really tough."

Ask open-ended questions

Asking open-ended questions can help you understand what your friend or family member is worried about, where they learned any troubling information, and what they have done to get answers to their questions. For example, you can ask, "How did watching that news report make you feel? What did you do next?"

Try not to dismiss their concerns as unreasonable or foolish. For example, avoid things like, "That's a silly concern," or "Why would you be worried about that?"

Ask if you can share information

When we have good information, we can make good decisions.

Once you understand your loved one's question or concern, ask if you can provide some information, and tell them where you get information you trust. If they agree, they will be more willing to listen to you instead of feeling like you're pushing unwanted information on them.

You can find answers to common questions from reputable sources, including on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#), and on the [PA Unites Against COVID website](#). You can also encourage them to talk to their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. Sharing quick, accurate answers from trusted sources can go a long way toward moving someone from worry to confidence. If you don't know the answer to their questions, consider offering to help look for information.



Help them find their own reason to get vaccinated

Everyone who chooses to get vaccinated does it for a reason—to protect their family, to protect their children, to be less anxious, to visit their parents, or to get back to activities like seeing friends, resuming work, or returning to school.

After addressing concerns with empathy and facts, you can steer the conversation from “why not” to the important reasons that matter to them—their “why.” You may choose to share your reasons for getting vaccinated or discuss common goals you may have, like visiting with each other safely. The reasons that someone may choose to get vaccinated will always be those that are most compelling to them personally.

Help make their vaccination happen

Once someone decides on their “why,” help them make a commitment to get vaccinated. Help make the path to vaccination shorter, easier, and less stressful for them. Offer to help your family member or friend make a vaccination appointment at a location nearby and, if needed, go with them to the appointment. Offer to help with transportation or to babysit if they need childcare. And if you can’t be there in-person, help them find resources and assistance.

Language Do’s and Don’ts

Using the right words can help our messages get through. When talking about COVID-19 vaccines, we recommend keeping in mind some of the do’s and don’ts below.

Do Say	Don’t Say
Vaccines (promotes all versus just one)	The vaccine
Vaccines are key	Vaccines are THE key
Talk to your doctor or medical provider	Get vaccinated
Safe and effective vaccines	A vaccine developed quickly
Public health	Government
Stay informed and get the latest information	There are things we still don’t know
Keep your family and those most vulnerable safe	Keep your country safe
Health & medical experts and doctors	Scientists
Benefits of the vaccine	Consequences of no vaccine
People who have questions	Anti-vaxxers



Meeting Hesitancy with Facts, Emotions, and Trust

Conversations about COVID-19 vaccines aren't always easy. There are many reasons people may be hesitant to get a vaccine. Choosing to get a vaccine – or not – is a very personal decision. As you engage with others, keep in mind the role facts, emotion, and trust play in your conversation.

Facts

In a lot of cases, those who are unsure about getting their vaccine are looking for more information.

- **Don't force facts on others who aren't ready.** Ask before you start sharing information. Getting their permission is a sign of respect and makes your message more likely to be received.

Emotion

Vaccine hesitancy isn't just about facts. Providing facts is an important part of the conversation, but sometimes how we communicate is even more important than what we communicate. Listening with empathy and compassion can make a big difference.

- **Address emotional issues by redirecting to the why.** Anxiety, uncertainty, and fear are normal feelings when facing something new. But don't forget the hope, excitement, and relief that vaccines bring as we get ready for the end of the pandemic.
- **Be encouraging.** So many Pennsylvanians have had to make hard sacrifices during the pandemic and experienced a lot of trauma. Make the conversation easy and non-confrontational. This isn't the time for shame or blame.

Trust

Not everyone has the same source of truth. New information and facts can often be met with skepticism or suspicion. That's where trusted messengers and trusted sources come in. These vary by person and community.

- **Be sensitive to your audience.** Factors like systemic racism, immigration status, historical health inequities, and geography can all play a part in trust issues.
- **Experience plays a role.** In the U.S., the history of mistreatment, disregard, and inequities experienced by our Black and African American communities within the government and healthcare systems has led to skepticism and mistrust about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Listening to your audience and acknowledging this can go a long way towards building trust in your communications.
- **Ask them what they need to feel more confident.** Get their feedback and asking if you can share information from your trusted sources.



KEY MESSAGES AND FACTS

What You Should Know About COVID-19 Vaccines

You have the power to finish this.

- COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to family, friends, and others around you.
- Some people may even test positive for COVID, but have no symptoms. But you can still spread the virus to others even if you feel fine.
- Vaccines can help end the pandemic. Medical studies show the vaccines can prevent COVID-19 and keep you from getting seriously ill even if you do get it.
- COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for all people 12 years old and older.
- Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available.
- Now is the time to get your vaccine.
- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine is the most effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.

- Vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to a specific virus, without us having to get the actual illness.
- COVID-19 vaccines help us to develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Even though the vaccines were developed quickly, no steps were skipped.
 - The U.S. vaccine safety system ensures vaccines are as safe as possible before releasing them to the public.
 - The clinical trials for these vaccines included tens of thousands of volunteers with diverse genders, ages, and ethnic backgrounds (including Black and African American volunteers).
 - CDC also continues to closely monitor COVID-19 vaccines and if a connection between a safety issue and a vaccine is found, the FDA and the vaccine manufacturer will work toward a solution.

The benefits of the vaccines far outweigh the potential side effects.

- All three vaccines are highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19.
- Some people may experience side effects after getting vaccinated. These are normal and are signs that the body is building immunity.
- If you have side effects, they are often mild and temporary and only last a few hours to a few days.
- Common ones include pain at the injection site, tiredness, chills, and headache.
- Millions have received the COVID-19 vaccines, and no long-term side effects have been detected.



There are no known effects on fertility from the vaccine.

- The CDC is urging pregnant people to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Pregnant and recently pregnant people are more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19 compared with non-pregnant people.
- Vaccines are also recommended for those who are breastfeeding, trying to become pregnant now, or who may become pregnant in the future.
- There is no risk of miscarriage or effects on fertility among those who have gotten the vaccine.
- Evidence about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy has been growing. These data suggest the benefits of receiving a COVID-19 vaccine outweigh any known or potential risks of vaccination during pregnancy.
- There is currently no evidence that any vaccines, including COVID-19 vaccines, cause fertility problems in women or men.

Make an appointment to get your COVID-19 vaccine.

- Many vaccine providers are taking walk-in and scheduled appointments.
- The best vaccine is the first one you can get.
- You can find a vaccine provider near you:
 - **Online** - Go to [Vaccine Finder](#) and search by zip code.
 - **Text** - Send your zip code to GETVAX (438829) for English and VACUNA (822862) for Spanish to get three locations and contact numbers nearby.
 - **Phone** - Call the PA Department of Health hotline at 1-877-724-3258.
- If you are unable to leave home, or it is logistically impractical, contact your local [Area Agency on Aging \(AAA\)](#) to get help connecting with a provider who can come to you.
- You will be **fully vaccinated** two weeks after your last dose of the vaccine.

Your second dose is important.

- The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines both require a second dose for you to be fully vaccinated. If you get the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you only need one dose.
- Two weeks after your last dose, your immune system will be able to recognize and protect against COVID-19.
- Once you get your last dose, snap a selfie, and share the great news on social media using the **#GotMyShotPA** hashtag. Encourage others to do the same.



Transportation should not be a barrier to getting your vaccine.

- If you need a ride to get to your vaccine appointment, Pennsylvania's [Shared Ride Programs](#) can help.
- Our public transit systems also offer accessible transportation, which is often free or subsidized for older adults and people with disabilities.

You do not need insurance or an ID to get your vaccine.

- The vaccine is free. You will never be asked for a credit card number or payment to make an appointment.
- You do not need a Social Security Number, or health insurance to make an appointment or get your vaccine.
- Many vaccination sites ask for insurance and Social Security information so they can charge administrative fees to insurance companies or the federal government, but those aren't required for you to get your vaccine.

Your immigration status and privacy are protected.

- Everyone can get a COVID-19 vaccine, no matter your immigration status.
- You will not be asked for any proof of immigration status when you arrive for your appointment.
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection will not conduct enforcement operations at or near vaccine distribution sites or clinics.
- Medical information in the U.S. is private and cannot be shared with immigration officials.

Learn about COVID-19 vaccines from trusted sources.

- Talk to your healthcare provider, doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about your vaccine questions and concerns.
- You can also do more reading and research at:
 - [PA Unites Against COVID](#)
 - [PA Department of Health \(DOH\)](#)
 - [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
 - [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#)

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VACCINE OUTREACH

PA Unites Against COVID Materials About COVID-19 Vaccines

Get Involved

You're an influencer in your community. Whether you're talking to family, friends, neighbors, colleagues, employees, customers, congregation, or constituents – **your role as a trusted messenger has never been more critical.** You can get the news out about vaccines by:

- Talking with colleagues, neighbors, family, and friends
- Hosting virtual events, townhalls, webinars, in-person meetings, and presentations
- Posting signs in businesses, workplaces, schools, places of worship, or other locations
- Writing op-eds, blog posts, newsletters, or articles
- Linking your website or intranet to [PA.GOV/COVID](https://www.pa.gov/COVID)
- Sharing facts and resources on your social media channels
- Encouraging others to sign up for the [Unite Against COVID newsletter](#) for the latest information on COVID-19 vaccines in PA

Best Practices for Encouraging Staff Vaccinations







As an employer, you can improve your staff's vaccination rates by developing a strategy for addressing concerns and making it easy to get a vaccine.

- **Identify a vaccine champion.** Designate an individual in your organization to lead the vaccination efforts for your staff. This builds accountability and gives your team a person to work with to get their questions and concerns addressed.
- **Have open, nonjudgmental communications.** Provide frequent and transparent communication about COVID-19, the vaccine, and leadership and policy decisions. Consistent communication in meetings, emails, posters, flyers, and trainings are important. Create an environment where non-judgmental conversations can be had – whether in group or one-on-one settings.
- **Bring vaccines to your staff.** If you need help hosting an onsite clinic, contact the PA Department of Health to get matched with a local provider.
- **Consider offering incentives to staff.** Many employers have found that incentives like bonuses, raffles, and paid time off have helped to increase vaccination rates.



Vaccine Marketing Materials

Download vaccine marketing materials from the PA Unites Against COVID website. On our [Community Resources](#) page you'll find:

 <p>Posters & Postcards</p>	 <p>Factsheets & Handouts</p>	 <p>PowerPoint Presentations</p>
 <p>Social Media Graphics</p>	 <p>Zoom Backgrounds & Screensavers</p>	 <p>Videos</p>

Print materials can be ordered for free through our [Online Order Form](#). All orders are printed and shipped at no cost to you. Many of the materials have been translated into 13 non-English languages, including:

1. Spanish (U.S.)
2. Chinese (Traditional)
3. Chinese (Simplified)
4. Vietnamese
5. Korean
6. Russian
7. Arabic
8. French (European)
9. Nepali
10. Burmese
11. Swahili
12. Karen
13. Haitian (Creole)

Updates and new materials are posted frequently as the situation evolves and changes, so be sure to check back often.



Emails, Newsletters, Websites, and Intranets

Consider sharing vaccine news and information through your email communications, newsletters, websites, and intranets. Sample short-form content is below.

Answers to Your COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

To protect yourself, your colleagues, and our residents, all staff are encouraged to get vaccinated.

Long-term care facilities (LTCF) and skilled nursing facilities (SNF) have experienced the hardest impacts of COVID-19. Illness, deaths, and social isolation from residents and family have been a heavy burden on staff and residents alike.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and are our best defense against the virus. If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, please contact [insert contact for HR or COVID-19 Vaccine Champion].

It's normal to have questions about something that is new. We're here to help you learn more about the vaccines so you can feel confident that you can make an informed decision.

More information about vaccines can also be found at [PA.GOV/COVID](https://www.pa.gov/covid).

Questions about COVID-19 Vaccines?

Having concerns about something new is normal. And it's a good thing because it means you want to know more.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and are our best defense against the virus. If you have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, please contact [insert contact for HR or COVID-19 Vaccine Champion].

More information about vaccines can also be found at [PA.GOV/COVID](https://www.pa.gov/covid).

