

COVID-19 Vaccine Commercialization FAQ

We have collected a list of the most frequently asked questions about the COVID-19 vaccine commercialization. Don't see your question listed? Email vaccines@phila.gov for more information.

What is COVID-19 vaccine commercialization?

Commercialization of COVID-19 vaccines will transition vaccines previously purchased by the U.S. government to established pathways of procurement, distribution, and payment by both public and private payers.

What is the Bridge Access Program?

The Bridge Access Program (BAP) offers COVID-19 vaccines for free to uninsured and underinsured adults 18 years of age and older in Philadelphia County. The program will end by December 31, 2024. See [here](#) for more information.

Will my pediatric practice be required to order COVID-19 vaccine?

With the exception of certain specialty providers, all enrolled Vaccines for Children (VFC) provider locations are required to procure and maintain COVID-19 vaccine inventory for the populations they serve. This is true for both VFC eligible children and privately insured patients. VFC providers will be able to order the minimum amount of COVID-19 vaccine via the PhilaVax immunization information systems (IIS) for VFC eligible patients.

Do I need dry ice or an ultra-low temperature freezer?

It depends. Moderna does not require specialized freezers or dry ice. However, Pfizer doses directly shipping from Pfizer are shipped at ultra-low temperatures (ULT), whereas doses coming from a distributor will be shipped at refrigerated temperatures, so it also depends on where you order from on your private side.

Doses shipped at ultra-low temperatures can be stored:

1) in an ULT freezer, 2) in the original shipping container if dry ice is refilled, or 3) in a regular refrigerator where the vaccine is viable for 10 weeks from the time of defrosting.

If we have a vial of Pfizer for 12+, can we give one dose to a child and one to an adult or do we have to use 2 vials?

Pfizer will only be shipping pre-filled syringe doses for 12+.

Have the COVID-19 vaccine recommendations and formulation changed?

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older should get an updated COVID-19 vaccine each year. The formulation has been updated for the 2023-2024 vaccine to target the XBB.1.5 variation of the Omicron strain.

What should I do with expired or spoiled COVID-19 vaccine?

COVID-19 vaccines that are expired or spoiled and **unopened** should be returned to the manufacturer. Use this [guide](#) to complete a return in PhilaVax.

COVID-19 vaccines that are expired or spoiled and **open** should be wasted. Use this [guide](#) to waste vaccine. At this time, sites will not be penalized for COVID-19 vaccine wastage that is not due to negligence.

Which providers are eligible to enroll in the BAP?

- FQHCs
- Private practices that regularly see uninsured or underinsured adults
- Correctional facilities

Who is eligible to get a COVID-19 vaccine through the BAP?

Patients who are **uninsured** or **underinsured** (has health insurance but does not cover the **total** cost of the COVID-19 vaccine) are eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine through the BAP. Providers will be **required** to screens **all** patients for eligibility.

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Is redistribution and borrowing of COVID-19 vaccine allowed under the BAP?

Redistribution (transferring vaccine from one site to another) and **borrowing** (replacing vaccine with private stock or from other federally funded programs) are prohibited under the BAP. Each site that wishes to provide BAP doses will need to enroll in the BAP individually.

What brands are available, and do I have to pick one?

Novavax, Pfizer, and Moderna are all available to order. Sites can pick any product and have multiple products at a time if they choose. The CDC does not prefer any one brand, and each vaccine is safe and effective.

Will there now be a cost for COVID-19 vaccines?

The US government will no longer be supplying free COVID-19 vaccines. However, many health insurance plans will cover the cost of the vaccine including Medicaid, Medicare, and some private plans. Adults 18 years of age and older who are uninsured or underinsured can get a free COVID-19 vaccine under the Bridge program. Children who are under the age of 18 and uninsured or underinsured can get a free COVID-19 vaccine under the Bridge Access Program.

What is a Beyond Use Date (BUD)?

The BUD is the last day that the vaccine can be safely used after it has been transitioned between storage states (thawed, refrigerated, etc.) or altered (diluted, drawn up for administration, etc.) for patient use. The BUD replaces the manufacturer's expiration date but never extends it.

What are the VaccineFinder reporting requirements?

Enrolled Bridge Access Providers are to ensure their location is populated on VaccineFinder. The Bridge Access Program does not require providers to complete inventory reporting; however, providers must be visible on vaccines.gov to participate in the program. BAP providers are to update VaccineFinder per CDC guidelines (every 29 days) to show their location has COVID-19 inventory available.

Visit the [covid.locating.health](https://www.covid.locating.health) provider website to update COVID-19 vaccine inventory.

For vaccines.gov technical assistance, submit a [vaccines.gov New Service Request](#), or contact COVID-19 Administration Reporting Systems (CARS) Help Desk via:

- Email: CARS_HelpDesk@cdc.gov
- Phone: 1-833-748-1979

VaccineFinder has a text service: Members can text their zip code to 438829 to find COVID-19 vaccine nearby.