



November 24, 2025

Dear Community Partners,

Thank you for carrying out important work that protects yourself, your loved ones, your clients, and your community, against preventable illness and death. You likely chose your occupation because you are exactly the kind of person who doesn't sit on the sidelines when your community needs you. Right now, your community needs you.

The number of COVID hospitalizations and deaths is about to start increasing. We see this happen each year, with the [worst impacts being felt by communities already affected by health inequalities](#). We also know that the best way to protect against serious illness, hospitalization, and death is by getting vaccinated each year. Unfortunately, [fewer New Yorkers are getting vaccinated against COVID](#). This means our communities, and our most vulnerable community members, are at increased risk for COVID hospitalization and death.

It can be hard to find trustworthy information about COVID. Here are the facts:

- Vaccination against COVID remains the most effective way to protect against severe COVID disease outcomes, including death. Vaccination can also protect against Long COVID.
- The Department of Health **recommends the COVID vaccination for all adults, pregnant individuals, and children over 6 months**. This aligns with guidance put out by major medical organizations. Individuals should receive an updated vaccine each year, just like the annual flu shot.
- People at highest risk for severe disease outcomes include those living with chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or HIV; adults over the age of 65; people who are pregnant; and children under the age of 2. Even if you or your clients do not fall into these groups, getting vaccinated can protect their social and family circles.
- The COVID vaccine is **free with most insurance plans** including Medicare, Medicaid, and the Essential Plan. For New Yorkers who are uninsured or underinsured, the vaccine may still be available at little or no cost through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program, the Vaccines for Adult (VFA) Program, or your local health department or Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

- Getting a COVID vaccine can be as simple as going to your local pharmacy. In New York, [pharmacists can administer the shot to anyone age 3 and older](#). New Yorkers are encouraged to call ahead to confirm availability.

COVID is a **preventable cause of severe illness and death** that will affect so many New Yorkers in the coming months. The good news is **you can help avoid this**. Here's how:

- If your health clinic is not already enrolled as a Vaccines for Children or Vaccines for Adults provider, become one today.
 - The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program is a federally funded initiative that provides vaccines recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to qualifying children (e.g. Medicaid-eligible, uninsured, underinsured, or American Indian/Alaska Native) through enrolled clinics. For more information visit: [About the Vaccines for Children \(VFC\) Program | VFC Program | CDC](#)
 - In New York State, a clinic can enroll by completing the NY VFC provider enrollment packet, designating vaccine coordinators, and submitting required training certificates. Use this link: [Enrollment Packet](#)
 - Email the packet to nyvfc@health.ny.gov or fax it to 518-449-6912.
- Make COVID vaccination part of every care plan. If a client is unable to obtain the vaccine from your organization, consider a warm referral to a pharmacy or another provider in your community.
- Order COVID vaccinations for your clients, particularly for those under 3 years old who are unable to be immunized at pharmacies.
- Reach out to your local pharmacies and providers now and build your community resource referral partnerships.
- Access to COVID vaccination remains a challenge for some. If your agency or organization has mobile clinic capabilities, we strongly encourage you to consider offering vaccination services in accessible community locations such as community centers, parks, and grocery stores. This proactive approach can help protect vulnerable populations and increase overall vaccination rates.

Thank you for ensuring everyone in your community is offered an updated vaccine.

Links to Additional Resources:

- [Northeast Public Health Collaborative Recommendations For The 2025-2026 Covid-19 Vaccine](#)
- [New York State Standing Orders](#)

- The Department offers a toolkit with social media resources to support your public health efforts, including COVID vaccination. [New York State Department of Health - Public Health Toolkit](#)
- COVID Vaccine FAQ: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/frequently-asked-questions-0>
- COVID Vaccine Centralized Mailbox: covid19vaccine@health.ny.gov
- For general questions about vaccines please contact: immunize@health.ny.gov

In health,



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