

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHARMACY-BASED IMMUNIZATION SERVICES DURING COVID-19

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Pharmacies are essential access points for vaccination services. Pharmacy-based immunization services play an important role in maintaining adequate vaccination rates in their community and reducing potential outbreaks of vaccine-preventable disease. Pharmacies will also play an important role in the public health response to the pandemic, especially when a COVID-19 vaccine is available.

As we learn more about the nature of the disease and as economies begin to re-open, the California Pharmacists Association (CPhA) COVID-19 taskforce encourages pharmacists to resume or continue immunization services while protecting personnel and patients from potential exposure to COVID-19.

Recommendations:

1. Continue or resume pharmacy-based immunization services
 - a. If pharmacies can only provide limited services, then consider prioritizing groups at higher risk for vaccine-preventable diseases, including older adults, pregnant women, and adolescents
2. Consider specific hours dedicated for immunization services or appointment-based services
3. Remind patients to wear a face covering when they arrive, post signage regarding this policy, and have surgical face masks on hand for anyone who arrives without a face covering
4. Reengineer immunization processes to use physical distancing when possible, including but not limited to:
 - a. Encouraging patients to wait outside or in their cars until the vaccine is ready to be administered
 - b. Using electronic or remote completion of vaccination screening and consent forms
 - c. Ensuring that patients are able to maintain a 6-foot distance from others, especially in waiting areas, which are still essential for patients to be monitored for 15 minutes after immunization
 - d. Preparing all necessary supplies prior to vaccine administration to minimize the amount of time that the patient needs to spend in the pharmacy or immunization area
5. Incorporate COVID-19 screening into the standard vaccine screening procedure, including:
 - a. Asking about COVID 19 risk factors



- i. Signs/symptoms of COVID-19
 - ii. Known or suspected COVID-19 exposure
 - b. Checking temperature before vaccination (temperature less than 100.4oF or 38oC is not a contraindication to vaccination)
 - c. If a patient has active COVID-19 symptoms or disease, then consider deferring vaccination until criteria to discontinue home isolation has been met
 - i. Order and administer a COVID-19 diagnostic test or refer to another provider for testing
6. Hand hygiene should be performed before and after vaccine administration
7. Ensure pharmacy personnel and patients are wearing appropriate PPE during both the vaccine preparation and administration
 - a. Pharmacists, or other qualified vaccine administrators, should wear gloves and surgical face masks (cloth face coverings are not appropriate)
 - i. Gloves should not be re-used and should be changed between patients
 - ii. Face masks can be changed according to your pharmacy's current procedures
 - iii. Face shield or goggles may be considered
 - b. Patients should wear an appropriate face covering; consider providing surgical face masks, if available
 - c. If adequate PPE is unavailable, then the vaccination should be referred to another provider or deferred to a later time
 - d. If administering intranasal influenza vaccine, consider additional PPE, including a face shield or goggles
8. Regularly disinfect all surfaces and supplies that are used in vaccine preparation and administration
9. When possible, ensure that vaccinations are administered in an area that is generally open and well-ventilated
 - a. For an enclosed room, consider using a portable HEPA filtration system
 - b. It may be appropriate to consider using an outdoor area (while maintaining appropriate measures to ensure patient privacy) or drive-thru
 - i. If drive-thru service is used, require patients who are driving themselves to remain in the parking lot for at least 15 minutes in case they have a reaction to the vaccine
 - ii. For outdoor vaccination, consider ambient temperature and ensure the vaccine is stored correctly until administration
9. Report vaccines administered to the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) according to state law



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ABOUT CPhA:

The California Pharmacists Association (CPhA) is the largest statewide professional association for pharmacists, student pharmacists, and pharmacy technicians in the country. CPhA represents the pharmacy profession in all practice settings and promotes the health of the public through the practice of pharmacy. For more information, visit cpha.com.