

IMMUNIZATION COVID-19 UPDATE

ISSUE NO 13 | MAY 5, 2021



VACCINE DOSES
ADMINISTERED IN
LOUISIANA

2,630,581

PROVIDER
ORDERING OF
J&J COVID-19
VACCINE IN
LINKS

Providers can now
order J&J COVID-19
vaccine in LINKS. (Page
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QUESTION OF THE WEEK:

How can I get my employees vaccinated?

The Louisiana Department of Health is now offering COVID-19 on-site vaccinations for Louisiana businesses and other workforces. These vaccinations are administered by a mobile response team that can be scheduled to meet the needs of employers throughout the state.

To qualify, an employer must have at least 10 people being vaccinated through this mobile service that meet the current eligibility criteria – at least 16 years of age. This includes your employees and your employees' dependents.

COVID-19 vaccines currently being administered are from Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson (J&J). Pfizer and Moderna are two dose vaccines, while J&J is one dose. All three vaccines have been authorized for emergency use by the FDA and are safe and effective to use.

Individuals who receive a Pfizer or Moderna vaccination will schedule their second dose during their first dose vaccination appointment. Second doses will be given at the same location where a person received their first dose. Johnson & Johnson vaccine recipients do not require a second appointment.

There is no cost to the employer or the employee for this service and no insurance is required.

Online Workplace Vaccination Scheduling

Fill out the following online form to set up a COVID-19 vaccination event:

[Workplace Vaccination Support Request](#) | [Department of Health](#) | [State of Louisiana](#)

HHS PROGRAM
TO COVER
COVID-19
VACCINATION
COSTS FOR
MORE PATIENTS

The HHS announced a new program that will cover the cost of administering COVID-19 vaccines to patients enrolled in certain health plans. (Page 2)



WEEKLY COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Here is an overview of major updates that occurred over the week.

Provider Ordering of Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 Vaccine in LINKS

On Monday, May 3, 2021, Johnson & Johnson (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine became available for providers to order through LINKS. J&J COVID-19 vaccine can be ordered in increments of 10. This will be the only way to order and receive all COVID-19 vaccine from the state. The ordering process is the same as ordering Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccine that began on Wednesday, April 14, 2021.

Providers who are planning and coordinating community events will need to place an order for vaccines directly in LINKS, in advance of the event date.

Ordering Process

Once a vaccine order is placed directly by a provider, it will be reviewed and approved by the Louisiana Immunization Program. A provider can generally expect delivery of the vaccine within 3-5 business days after the order is placed in LINKS. Providers will be able to check on the status of their order through LINKS.

To view the vaccine orders and reconciliation training video, visit lalinks.org and click on the *LINKS TRAINING VIDEOS* button to see a complete list of all LINKS training videos. The Vaccine Orders and Reconciliation video is listed as video 12 and Lunch with LINKS: COVID-19 Vaccine Ordering and Reconciliation in LINKS is listed as videos 30 – 33.

For further assistance, email la.links@la.gov or contact your regional immunization consultant listed on the homepage of lalinks.org.

HHS Announces a New Program to Cover COVID-19 Vaccination Costs for More Patients

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) announced a new program **covering costs of administering COVID-19 vaccines to patients enrolled in health plans that either do not cover vaccination fees or cover them with patient cost-sharing.** Since providers cannot bill patients for COVID-19 vaccination fees, the COVID-19 Coverage Assistance Fund (CAF), addresses an outstanding compensation need for providers on the front lines vaccinating underinsured patients.

CAF is focusing on instances where individuals have insurance, but vaccines are either not covered or are but typically with patient

cost-sharing. To address these gaps, the CAF will be compensating providers for eligible claims, at national Medicare rates which increased in March to reflect newer information on the true costs associated with administering the vaccines.

CAF also builds on the HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Program, which has been reimbursing providers for vaccine administration fees associated with uninsured individuals.

The CAF is funded through the Provider Relief Fund Program. The CAF program will accept eligible claims from providers dated on or after December 12, 2020. Additionally, claims must be submitted electronically and are subject to available funding.

Register for an upcoming CAF webinar:

- [Thursday, May 6](#)
- [Wednesday, May 12](#)

For more information on the COVID-19 Coverage Assistance Fund, visit hrsa.gov.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) COVID-19 Billing

Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has released a set of toolkits for providers, states, and insurers designed to:

- Help the health care system quickly administer the vaccines as they're available
- Increase the number of providers who can administer the vaccine
- Ensure private insurers and Medicaid programs understand their responsibility to cover the vaccine at no cost to patients

This toolkit includes:

- [How you can enroll in Medicare to bill for administering COVID-19 vaccines](#)
- [The COVID-19 vaccine Medicare coding structure](#)
- [Medicare payment rates for administering COVID-19 vaccines](#)
- [How to bill correctly for administering vaccines, including roster and centralized billing](#)
- [Monoclonal antibody infusion for treating COVID-19](#)
- [New COVID-19 Treatments Add-on Payment \(NCTAP\)](#)

If you participate in the CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program, you must:

- Administer the vaccine with no out-of-pocket cost to your patients for the vaccine or administration of the vaccine
- Vaccinate everyone, including the uninsured, regardless of coverage or network status

You also cannot:

- Balance bill for COVID-19 vaccinations



- Charge your patients for an office visit or other fee if COVID-19 vaccination is the only medical service given
- Require additional medical or other services during the visit as a condition for getting a COVID-19 vaccination

Additional Resources:

- [LA Medicaid fee schedule](#)
- [The five LA managed care organizations \(MCO\)](#)
- General Healthy Louisiana customer service hotline: 1 (855) 229-6848
- Providers administering the vaccine to people without health insurance can request reimbursement for the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine through the [HRSA COVID-19 Uninsured Program](#).

For more information on COVID-19 reimbursement, go to [cms.gov](https://www.cms.gov).

Visiting Beaches and Pools During a Pandemic

The places we visit to swim, play, and relax in water include beaches – swim areas in oceans, lakes, and other natural bodies of water – and pools, water playgrounds, and hot tubs. There is no evidence that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can spread to people through water in these places.

There are several actions you can take to reduce your risk of getting or spreading the virus when you go to public swim areas.

Use social distancing in and out of the water.

- Whether you're in or out of the water, stay at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with.
- Avoid crowded swim areas, beaches, pools, etc. where you cannot maintain a 6 foot distance from others.

Wear a mask.

- Wear masks when you are not in the water.

Wash hands often and avoid sharing items.

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating or drinking. If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid sharing items, such as food, equipment, toys, and supplies, with people who don't live with you.

For more information on visiting public swimming areas during a pandemic, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).



LOUISIANA COVID-19 VACCINE DEMOGRAPHICS

SERIES COMPLETED BY RACE:

- **White:** 61.38 %
- **Black:** 27.58%
- **American Indian:** 0.27%
- **Asian:** 2.52%
- **Native Hawaiian:** 0.19%
- **Unknown:** 1.31%
- **Other:** 6.75%

SERIES COMPLETED BY AGE:

- **5-17:** 0.49%
- **18-29:** 7.84%
- **30-39:** 10.22%
- **40-49:** 11.8%
- **50-59:** 17.29%
- **60-69:** 24.5%
- **70+:** 27.86%

SERIES COMPLETED BY GENDER:

- **Female:** 57.33%
- **Male:** 42.39%
- **Unknown:** 0.28%

All breakdowns shown here are for Louisiana residents only. Race data completeness is expected to improve as we continue our outreach with vaccine providers.



Good Reads

FDA expected to OK Pfizer vaccine for teens ages 12 and older by next week – This article talks about the FDA authorizing Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine for young adults age 12 and older by next week.

Read more at [nola.com](https://www.nola.com).

LDH paying close attention to new variants coming into Louisiana – This article talks about Louisiana now having three different versions of the COVID-19 virus identified and possibly spreading across the state.

Read more at [wafb.com](https://www.wafb.com).

Reaching 'herd immunity' is unlikely in the US, experts now believe – This article discusses how the decline for vaccine demand will make herd immunity intangible and COVID-19 will become a manageable threat that will continue to circulate in the US for years to come.

Read more at [nytimes.com](https://www.nytimes.com).