



## Behavioral Health COVID 19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

**Q1. Do the behavioral health residential programs in Phase 1A include mental health, substance use disorders, detox and children's residential programs?**

A1. Yes, these facilities and programs are included in Phase 1A, Group 2. All residents who meet the age eligibility for vaccines per the FDA, plus all paid and unpaid health care workers or direct care workers serving in these settings, are eligible to receive the vaccine.

**Q2. Are patients in psychiatric hospitals, such as the Oregon State Hospital and Cedar Hills Hospital, included in Phase 1A? If so, in what group?**

A2. Yes, patients in psychiatric hospitals are included in Phase 1A, Group 1, because their risk factors and length of stay are similar to residents in skilled nursing and memory care facilities.

**Q3: Are individuals enrolled in Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) eligible for the COVID-19 Vaccine?**

A3: Yes, individuals in Oregon enrolled in ACT are eligible as are staff members that are part of the ACT Team.

**Q4. How do I find out when my facility will provide vaccinations?**

A4. Initial vaccine administration is occurring with specific groups as outlined by the [Phase 1A Vaccine Sequencing Plan](#). Vaccines are being administered by hospitals, emergency medical service (EMS) agencies, local public health authorities (LPHAs), skilled nursing facilities and other partners serving Phase 1A populations. For information about vaccine sequencing, please contact the OHA Vaccine Planning unit by emailing [COVID19.Vaccine@dhsosha.state.or.us](mailto:COVID19.Vaccine@dhsosha.state.or.us). For other vaccine questions, please contact [ORCOVID@211info.org](mailto:ORCOVID@211info.org).

**Q5. Do all residents have to receive the vaccine, and how are physicians involved in this decision?**

A5. No, residents are not required to receive the vaccine, but OHA strongly recommends vaccination for the safety and health of the entire community. Programs are encouraged to develop internal policies for serving residents who decline the vaccine and to clearly communicate these policies. Residents should be encouraged to consult with their physician about any concerns they may have about vaccine safety.

**Q6. Do I get to choose which vaccine my facility receives?**

A6. No, not at this time. OHA determines which vaccine to allocate based on storage needs.

**Q7. If someone in my facility has already had COVID-19, do they still need to get the vaccine?**

A7. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends people receive the vaccine regardless of their history of COVID-19 infection, with or without symptoms. The CDC does not recommend testing to check for prior infection before administering the vaccine.

**Q8. If my facility's residents or staff have more health questions about the vaccine, where do they go for more information?**

A8. They can contact their local public health authority or health care provider. They may also contact the OHA Vaccine Planning unit by emailing [COVID19.Vaccine@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:COVID19.Vaccine@dhsoha.state.or.us) or the general vaccine information email at [ORCOVID@211info.org](mailto:ORCOVID@211info.org).

**Q9. We didn't register for the Federal Pharmacy Program because we weren't aware our facility needed to do this. What do we do now to access the vaccine?**

A9. If you did not register, there are several options for your facility to receive the vaccine, including:

- **Contact your local public health authority (LPHA):** Providers can contact their LPHAs to access vaccine services with the LPHA and other community resources. LPHAs will provide both doses (if giving the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine) and will report updated vaccine data to OHA.
- **Register as a vaccine provider:** Agencies who can provide 100 or more vaccines per site can register to receive a shipment and store/administer the vaccine. These providers can bill as normal and will administer both doses. For more information, email [Vaccine.ProviderEnroll@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:Vaccine.ProviderEnroll@dhsoha.state.or.us)
- **OHA state options and contracts:** OHA will identify resources, such as pharmacies and other state contractors, to provide vaccinations for behavioral health programs. For more information, please contact [Cissie.M.Bollinger@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:Cissie.M.Bollinger@dhsoha.state.or.us).
- **Other community resources:** Agencies can access community resources such as OHSU, state-sponsored clinics, hospital clinics, primary care providers or pharmacies.

OHA continues to monitor access to vaccines and will continue to partner with facilities to ensure vaccines are made available. If you are having problems accessing the vaccine, please contact Cissie Bollinger, Licensing, Certification and Technical Assistance Manager, at [Cissie.M.Bollinger@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:Cissie.M.Bollinger@dhsoha.state.or.us).

**Q10. Will you supply information to our residents and staff in addition to this FAQ to answer anticipated questions?**

A10. Currently, OHA is not providing answers to anticipated questions from residents and staff. OHA encourages providers to use the information in this FAQ, to answer questions as factually as possible, and to make educational information available to assist residents and staff so they can make informed decisions. OHA recommends providers review information found on the [OHA COVID-19 website](#).

**Q11. How will Behavioral Health Residential Providers be notified about the process and timeline to receive the vaccine?**

A11. In January 2021, the Health Systems Division (HSD) conducted a survey to gather data about vaccine status. HSD will continue to survey providers for updated information so that HSD can respond to the ongoing needs of providers and better support vaccine distribution. As the vaccine work continues, providers may be contacted directly by OHA for this purpose.

**Q12. Can staff be assigned as the primary contact for this information?**

A12. Yes, if you would like to designate a primary contact for your agency or specific program, please contact Cissie Bollinger, Licensing, Certification and Technical Assistance Manager, at [Cissie.M.Bollinger@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:Cissie.M.Bollinger@dhsoha.state.or.us).

**Q13. Is there anything we should do to prepare for an outside pharmacy coming into our facility?**

A13. If your facility is scheduled to receive first or second dose vaccinations from an outside pharmacy that will vaccinate onsite, OHA recommends taking the standard precautions to prevent possible spread of COVID-19, including wearing masks, sanitizing surfaces and maintaining six feet of distance from others. You should discuss the visit with residents and staff ahead of time to prepare them for the process including obtaining any necessary guardian consent.

**Q14. We heard that other health care facilities stagger their staff vaccination schedules in case staff have a reaction to the vaccine and miss work. Should we do that?**

A14. OHA recommends that you consider your individual staffing needs and your agency policies when adjusting your regular staff schedules. For questions pertaining to employee policies and legal implications of scheduling, organizations should contact their legal counsel. If you have questions about allergic reactions, please discuss directly with the pharmacy or contractor when making plans for the vaccination event.

**Q15. Does OHA require that we mandate vaccinations for our staff?**

A15. At this time, OHA does not require COVID-19 vaccinations for any group of people or in any workplace setting.

**Q16. Can we require vaccinations for our staff?**

**A16:** Employment requirements fall under the Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI) oversight. You can find COVID-19 guidance for employers on the BOLI [website at https://www.oregon.gov/boli/workers/Pages/covid-vaccine.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/boli/workers/Pages/covid-vaccine.aspx).

If your staff have concerns due to health reasons, such as history of allergic reactions or because they believe the vaccine isn't safe, please share [this FAQ](#).

**If a staff member does not want to get the vaccine due to a religious reason or a disability, see [this document](#). Questions:**

If you have questions related to COVID-19 vaccines, please send your questions to one of the following so OHA can assist.

COVID-19 vaccine general: [COVID19.Vaccine@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:COVID19.Vaccine@dhsoha.state.or.us)

COVID-19 vaccine provider enrollment: [Vaccine.ProviderEnroll@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:Vaccine.ProviderEnroll@dhsoha.state.or.us)

COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee: [Covid.vaccineadvisory@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:Covid.vaccineadvisory@dhsoha.state.or.us)

**Document accessibility:** For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact the Health Information Center at 1-971-673-2411, 711 TTY or [COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsoha.state.or.us](mailto:COVID19.LanguageAccess@dhsoha.state.or.us).