

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

How do you know if you are eligible?

- **You must meet one or more of the following criteria:**

- 1) Members who are 65 and older
- 2) Healthcare Worker
- 3) First Responder
- 4) Those currently in a nursing home, rest home, or assisted living facility
- 5) If you have **two or more of the following health conditions*** that put you at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19, you are now eligible to get the vaccine:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cancer
- Chronic Kidney Disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Obesity & Severe Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Smoking
- Type 2 diabetes
- Weakened immune system from solid organ transplant

**You will need to attest that you are eligible to receive the vaccine, but you will not need a doctor's note or other documentation to show you have two or more of the above conditions. Conditions are subject to change based on guidance by the CDC and Massachusetts Department of Public Health*

Where can I get the vaccine and how do I schedule an appointment?

- Please refer to the attached letter for scheduling information.

How long will it take to get an appointment?

- Steward Health Choice is working hard to assist members in getting their vaccination scheduled. Massachusetts gets doses from the federal government, but the doses are in high demand. Please be patient, know that more vaccines are coming to the state week by week, and know we are working to get members scheduled as quickly as possible.

Are there any costs to me to get the vaccine?

- **NO. THE VACCINE ITSELF IS FREE.** You may be asked for verification of birth date and for a copy of your insurance, but your insurance will not be billed. At some sites, insurance may be billed for the cost administration of the vaccine but you will not be billed for that aspect of the vaccine.

Can I get help with transportation to my vaccine appointment?

- Yes, all MassHealth members and people eligible for Health Safety Net (including MassHealth Limited) can get free transportation to and from their COVID-19 vaccine appointment. Steward Health Choice will work with you to secure transportation or if you prefer to secure your own transportation you can by calling MassHealth Customer Service at (800) 841-2900 to request transportation services.

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe?

- **YES.** The COVID-19 vaccines are safe. Vaccines go through rigorous testing and large clinical trials with diverse participants before they are approved for widespread use.
- The vaccine doesn't have any of the virus that causes COVID-19 in it and you cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

- Getting a vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 and may also help protect loved ones who are not yet vaccinated.

What you need to know about the vaccine?

- There are currently two FDA-approved vaccines in the United States:
 - Moderna (18+ years old to participate)
 - Pfizer-BioNTech (16+ years old to participate)
- Both vaccines are available in Massachusetts and both vaccines are highly effective.
- You need two doses to be fully protected.
 - The first shot (dose) starts building protection.
 - The second shot (dose) is needed to get the most protection the vaccine has to offer.
 - You cannot get both shots (doses) at the same time. The location you get your first shot (dose) will work with you to schedule your second shot (dose) a couple of weeks later. (21 days between doses of the Pfizer vaccine, 28 days between doses of the Moderna vaccine)

Should I still follow safety measures after vaccination?

- YES! It will take time for everyone to get the vaccine. We all have to work together to stop the spread of COVID-19. Wear a mask, wash your hands, avoid groups, and keep your distance, even after you get the vaccine. Though we have solid data that the vaccination protects the person getting vaccinated, we do not yet have guidance on if vaccination prevents that person from spreading COVID to others. Those who are vaccinated should continue to wear masks and social distance in social settings and continue precautions around loved ones.
- Please keep in mind as well that the vaccine does not have enough time to protect you immediately on the day of your vaccination. It takes a few weeks to start working in your body and you should still be cautious.

Where can I learn more?

- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) has a website with everything you need to know about COVID-19 vaccines, including information about eligibility, scheduling, vaccine safety for specific groups (pregnant women, people with severe allergies, children, etc.) and other FAQs. To learn more, visit www.mass.gov/covidvaccine