



July 20, 2021

RE: Offering COVID-19 in Pediatric Offices – A Call to Action

Dear Suburban Cook Pediatric Provider,

The fight against COVID-19 has entered a more hopeful and productive phase. To that end, Pediatricians are now tasked with the familiar role of leading the immunization effort. As mass vaccination sites across the state are being phased out and because Pediatricians are the most trusted source of information on immunizations, we hope you will make the COVID-19 vaccine available in your office if you have not done so already.

As of July 15, 2021, 58.9% of Suburban Cook County residents have received at least one dose, with 48.2% being fully vaccinated*. While it is unknown when further authorization will be granted, Pfizer has stated they hope to seek Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for children 5 to 11 sometime in September or October. Immunizing eligible patients and preparation for immunizing additional age-groups now is essential. Important COVID-19 vaccine updates since May 2021:

- **Don't delay:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its clinical guidance to allow COVID-19 vaccines to be administered at the same time as other routine vaccines. *More on this [from the AAP](#).*
- **Easier storage:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized undiluted, thawed Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine vials to be stored in the refrigerator at 2°C to 8°C (35°F to 46°F) for up to 1 month. *More on preparation and administration [COVID-19 Vaccine Quick Reference Guide for Healthcare Professionals](#).*
- **Myocarditis:** CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) continue to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 years of age and older given the greater risk of other serious complications related to COVID-19, such as hospitalization, multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), or death. *More on [interim clinical decisions](#) for COVID-19 Vaccines.*

First steps to offering COVID-19 vaccines in your office:

- Enroll to be a COVID-19 vaccine provider.
 - Vaccine for Children (VFC) providers: Enroll to become a COVID-19 vaccine provider within I-CARE under the COVID tab/Enrollment.
 - Non-VFC providers: If you do not already have I-CARE access, request it. The I-CARE enrollment packet can be found [here](#).
- Once enrolled in I-CARE, access the COVID tab to complete both the CDC and IDPH COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Agreements.
- Order vaccine – Cook County Department of Public Health offers pickup from the Oak Forest location in increments as low as one vial (for those who are not able to order increments of 450 or 1170 Pfizer directly through I-CARE). See [here](#) for more information. See [here](#) for June 4, 2021 ICAAP webinar that includes information on other options to obtain vaccine, including the IDPH Transfer Program and hub & spoke model options.
- Help the families in your care understand that the COVID-19 vaccine is our best hope for ending the pandemic. Notify them that you have the COVID-19 vaccine (AAP social media [toolkit](#)) and consider vaccinating parents/caregivers/others in your office as well.

The goal at this time is to vaccinate at every opportunity, rather than ensure no doses are “wasted”. If you have questions on getting started, please reach out to Dr. Jacqueline Korpics at jkorpics@cookcountyhhs.org. Thank you for all you are doing!

Sincerely,

Mary Dobbins, MD, FAAP
President, Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Jacqueline Korpics, MD, MPH, FAAP
Cook County Department of Public Health