



August 31, 2021

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

Dear McHenry County 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. Pediatricians are the most trusted source of information on immunizations. As mass vaccination sites across the state are being phased out, we hope you will make the COVID-19 vaccine available in your office if you have not done so already.

As of August 26, 2021, 53.7% of 308,570 McHenry County residents are fully vaccinated. While it is unknown if 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 preparing to immunize additional age-groups now is essential.

Important COVID-19 vaccine updates since May 2021:

- **Food and Drug Administration Approval:** The FDA approved “Comirnaty” for individuals 16+. The vaccine continues to be available to individuals 12 through 15 through EUA. [FDA press release](#).
- **Off-Label Use:** Don't use COVID-19 vaccine off-label for children. [AAP statement](#).
- **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. See [here](#) for June 4, 2021 ICAAP webinar that includes information on hub & spoke model options (note vaccine can be transferred from site to site and shared among multiple offices with proper documentation).
- 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 is to vaccinate at every opportunity and lead with this, rather than to work to ensure no doses are wasted. If you have questions on getting started, please reach out to [vaccine@mchenrycountyil.gov](mailto:vaccine@mchenrycountyil.gov) for personal technical assistance. Thank you for all you are doing!

Sincerely,

Mary Dobbins, MD, FAAP, President ICAAP