

COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs for Providers

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is seeking federal approval to help support delivery of the vaccine to all Medi-Cal beneficiaries. **The vaccine is being provided at no cost to all Californians.**

DHCS is following California's COVID-19 vaccination plan, which was approved by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). It calls for implementation in several phases: For further information on the state's vaccination planning efforts please visit <https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/>.

California is leveraging its existing immunization framework and emergency response infrastructure to coordinate efforts among state, local, and territorial authorities to administer the vaccine. Throughout this effort, DHCS will share appropriate information with health plans and providers, health plan partners, counties, other key stakeholders, and beneficiaries.

Consistent with the approach being taken by Medicare through Medicare Advantage Plans, DHCS will carve out the COVID-19 vaccine from Medi-Cal managed care health plans and will reimburse providers under the Fee-for-Service (FFS) delivery system for both medical and pharmacy claims. This approach will ease program administration, eliminate challenges with out-of-network provider reimbursements, and keep vaccine administration fee rates consistent for providers regardless of delivery system.

Medi-Cal proposes to reimburse the associated COVID-19 vaccine administration fee at the allowable Medicare rate for all claims (medical, outpatient, and pharmacy), based on the number of required doses. As the federal government will pay for the initial vaccines, there is no Medi-Cal provider reimbursement for the COVID-19 vaccine itself. Providers will bill for administration of the COVID-19 vaccine on medical, outpatient, or pharmacy claims, based on current policy. The Medicare administration rate DHCS is seeking differs from the current Medi-Cal pharmacy administration fee today. DHCS is also seeking [federal approval](#) to cover the cost of the vaccine administration for Medi-Cal beneficiaries who are in restricted scope coverage, the COVID-19 Uninsured population and enrollees of the Family Planning, Access, Care, and Treatment (Family PACT) program.

Additionally, DHCS is seeking [federal approval](#) to pay Federally Qualified Health Centers, Rural Health Centers, and Tribal 638 clinics for the vaccine administration fee outside of their current Prospective Payment System or All Inclusive Rate.

DHCS submitted all federal waiver requests on December 18, 2020 to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and has issued [initial policy guidance](#) on COVID-19 vaccine administration and our reimbursement policy. Policy and reimbursement guidance will be updated upon additional CMS guidance and/or approvals of requested waivers.

Q: Who will be covering the vaccine immunization cost?

A: The initial supply of COVID-19 immunizations will be federally purchased, meaning DHCS will not provide Medi-Cal reimbursement for the vaccine itself. Please refer to the question below for information on the vaccine administration fee.

Q: Who can health care providers give the vaccination to?

A: All providers must vaccinate individuals regardless of existing health coverage or the type of coverage. Providers are prohibited from balance billing or otherwise charging vaccine recipients.

Q: How will it work if health care providers are not contracted / credentialed with DHCS?

A: The vaccine provider must be enrolled in Medi-Cal for purposes of obtaining reimbursement from DHCS for the vaccine administration fee. Medi-Cal providers who administer the vaccine to Medi-Cal beneficiaries will be reimbursed at the Medicare rate for the administration fee. More information on Medi-Cal provider enrollment can be found here: <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/provgovpart/Pages/PED.aspx>.

Q: Will the vaccine administration fee be covered for all patients on Medi-Cal?

A: Yes. The vaccine administration fee will be covered for all Medi-Cal beneficiaries who have full-scope Medi-Cal. DHCS is seeking federal approval to cover the administration fee for Medi-Cal beneficiaries with restricted scope coverage, the COVID-19 Uninsured population and enrollees in the Family Planning, Access, Care, and Treatment (FPACT) program.

Payment for the COVID-19 vaccine administration fee will be through the Medi-Cal Fee-for-Service delivery system for all covered populations, including those in Medi-Cal managed care plans.

Medi-Cal proposes to reimburse the associated COVID-19 vaccine administration fee at the allowable Medicare rate for all claims, medical and pharmacy, based on the number of required doses.

Q: Will immunization coverage apply to restricted scope group?

A: Yes. All vaccination providers must provide the vaccine regardless of coverage. DHCS is working on obtaining federal approval for immunization coverage for Medi-Cal beneficiaries in restricted scope coverage, individuals in the COVID-19 Uninsured program and individuals enrolled in the FPACT program.

Q: What billing codes should be used?

A: DHCS will be using the American Medical Association Current Procedural Terminology or CPT® codes for reporting of immunizations for COVID-19. These CPT® codes are unique for each COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccine Name	Vaccine Code / Description	CPT® Vaccine Administration Code
Pfizer-BioNTech	91300	0001A (1 st dose) 0002A (2 nd dose)
Moderna	91301	0011A (1 st dose) 0012A (2 nd dose)
Oxford–AstraZeneca	91302	0021A (1 st dose) 0022A (2 nd dose)

Q: How will vaccine information be disseminated?

A: DHCS will communicate updated immunization information to providers, stakeholders, health plans, county partners, and the community through strategies, such as:

- Developing written guidance for health plans, including All Plan Letters, as it relates to immunization distribution and reimbursement rates.
- Provider notices / bulletins on the [Medi-Cal website](#).

Q: What is the best way to ensure that patients return for their second shot?

A: Providers are encouraged to explain the health benefits and outcomes associated with second shot administration. Before the patient leaves the office after their first dose, ensure they schedule an appointment for their second dose.

Q: Where can health care providers enroll to become a vaccinator?

A: Pharmacies, retail clinics, providers, and any other sites of care must sign an agreement with the U.S. government to receive free supplies of the COVID-19 vaccine(s). Under the agreement, all providers must vaccinate individuals regardless of existing health coverage or the type of coverage. Providers are prohibited from balance billing or otherwise charging vaccine recipients.

Provider enrollment for vaccinators will occur in phases and local health departments will invite providers to enroll based on CDPH Allocation Guideline phases and vaccine availability. Enrollment is limited at this time to providers authorized by their [local health department](#) (LHD). Others may enroll later as vaccine supply increases.

Before enrolling, obtain your immunization information system (IIS) ID here: [CAIR2](#). Once you've been invited by your LHD and have your IIS ID, make sure that you meet all [requirements](#) before enrolling.

Providers with questions about enrolling in the California COVID-19 Vaccination Program can email COVIDCallCenter@cdph.ca.gov or call 1-833-502-1245, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Q: What information should be given to patients upon vaccination?

A: Before receiving the vaccine, patients must be provided with an Emergency Use Authorization fact sheet about the vaccine. After receiving the vaccine, patients must receive a vaccination card that identifies the brand of vaccine administered and the date their second vaccination (if applicable) is due.