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Please Continue Vaccinating Patients during COVID-19

The Maine Immunization Program encourages health care providers to continue vaccinating patients, especially infants and older adults, who are at highest risk of getting diseases that vaccines can prevent. Slowing or stopping access to immunizations increases our risk to outbreaks of other diseases.

Things for health care providers to consider:

- Risks to patients around possible exposure to COVID-19 when they come in for vaccinations and well child visits.
- Strategies in clinic operations to mitigate these risks.
- Local level of COVID-19 illnesses and how many sick patients come to your clinic.

Ways to safely give vaccines while protecting patients and staff:

- Limit well visits to early morning and use the rest of the day for sick visits.
- Dedicate specific clinics, buildings, or rooms for sick visits and for well visits.
- Conduct well visits for newborns, and for infants and younger children who require immunizations. Reschedule well visits for older children at a later date.
- Lower the number of patients on site at any one time. Think about closing a waiting room or registration area and have patients check in by phone from the parking lot.
- Consider different entrances in your clinic that sick and well patients may enter.
- Clearly mark entrances for patients who are high risk for COVID-19.
- Tell patients who are ill to use telemedicine or a phone call. Some chronic conditions may be safely managed by a phone consult or telemedicine visit.
- Examine patients by car visit. Tell patients to drive to the clinic and wait in their car while staff goes outside to check on them.
- Give vaccine to people in their car. Make sure to use proper hygiene and waste disposal practices outdoors just as you would indoors.
- Screen all patients and caregivers for high-risk symptoms.
- Refer high-risk adults to pharmacies who can give vaccines at less busy times to keep them safer.

Helpful Resources for Providers:

- [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know about Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#)
- [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#)
- [Guidance for administering vaccines when a child is sick](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)
- [Maine Centers for Disease Control Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) webpage](#)

For more information, please call the Maine Immunization Program at 207-287-3746