



Office of Children and Family Services

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Guidance Summary for COVID-19 Vaccine Access in Residential Programs Licensed or Certified by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS):

This letter is to notify provider agencies operating licensed or certified residential programs to direct certain high-risk staff to begin scheduling COVID-19 vaccination appointments for priority populations.

This guidance is based on the 1/11/21 guidance document issued by the New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) for OPWDD, OMH, OCFS, and OASAS titled, "Prioritization of Essential Healthcare and Direct Support Personnel as well as High-Risk Populations for COVID-19 Vaccination" (available online at [guidance-for-week-5-oasas-ocfs-omh-otda-1.11.21.pdf \(ny.gov\)](https://www.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/01/guidance-for-week-5-oasas-ocfs-omh-otda-1.11.21.pdf)).

Available vaccines. The FDA has issued Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) for two vaccines for use in the prevention of COVID-19:

- **Pfizer** vaccine for **persons 16 years of age and older**
- **Moderna** vaccine for **persons 18 years of age and older.**

Fact sheets for each vaccine are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/eua/index.html>.

Prioritization. The groups prioritized for vaccination beginning immediately includes **staff** with direct and regular interaction with residents in OCFS licensed and certified residential programs, including:

- voluntary authorized agency run congregate care foster care programs
- juvenile detention facilities
- runaway and homeless youth programs

See the above risk prioritization guidance issued by the NYS DOH to stratify staff risk levels for further prioritization.

Consent: All recipients of the vaccine, or a person authorized by law to consent on their behalf, will be required to provide informed consent for the vaccine to be administered. The consent form is available on DOH's website: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/01/final_covid-19_vaccine_consent_form.pdf.

Additional guidance from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) will be forthcoming for those programs operating in NYC.

We will be reaching out to set up a time to discuss this new priority vaccine guidance with you and to answer your questions.