

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

1215 O Street, MS 9-60  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
TTY: 711  
(916) 654-1897



October 25, 2021

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: COVID-19 VACCINE BOOSTER SHOT UPDATE

Late last week, the federal government issued authorization and recommendations for both the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines to be used as booster shots. A booster shot is an additional, usually lower, dose of a vaccine given to an individual who already is fully vaccinated. This announcement follows September 2021 authorization for a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 booster shot. As a result, all three vaccines approved for use in the United States are available as a booster shot to any eligible individual, regardless of the brand of that individual's initial vaccination.

Consistent with the September 2021 announcement regarding the Pfizer booster shot, only certain people are [eligible](#) to receive a booster shot under the federal guidance, with certain terms further defined at the hyperlinks below [**emphasis** added]:

“For individuals who received a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, the following groups are **eligible** for a booster shot at 6 months or more after their initial series:

- 65 years and older
- Age 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](#)
- Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#)
- Age 18+ who work or live in [high-risk settings](#)

For individuals who received the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, booster shots are also **recommended** for those who are 18 and older and who were vaccinated two or more months ago.”

Additionally, on Friday, October 22, 2021, the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup (Workgroup) made an [announcement](#), which guides California's implementation of booster shots. The Workgroup's announcement indicated that for individuals previously receiving a Moderna vaccination [**emphasis** added]:

“1. Among recipients of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, those who **should** receive a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine include those at increased risk for hospitalization and severe disease, including those:

- Age 65 years and older
- Age 18 years and older residing in a long-term care facility, or
- Age 50 through 64 years with underlying medical conditions or at increased risk of social inequities. [*DDS note: “social inequities” is not defined. It typically refers to inequitable access to, or services from, social services and supports.*]

**“Building Partnerships, Supporting Choices”**

2. Among recipients of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, those who **may** receive a booster dose of COVID-19 vaccine include persons:

- Age 18 through 49 years with underlying medical conditions or at increased risk of social inequities.
- Age 18 through 64 years who are risk for SARS-CoV-2 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting.”

The Workgroup also stated that anyone age 18 and older previously receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine **should** obtain a booster shot of any brand.

Please note that based upon the guidance above, booster shots are NOT required, although they are proven to increase protection from COVID-19 and its variants, and therefore are recommended or available. Additionally, the September 28, 2021 state public health order mandating vaccination for specified workers does NOT include a mandate for a booster shot, since booster shots themselves are recommended or available but not required.

We will continue to keep you updated as more information becomes available.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by:*

PETE CERVINKA  
Chief, Data Analytics and Strategy

cc: Regional Center Board Presidents  
Regional Center Administrators  
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services  
Regional Center Community Services Directors  
Association of Regional Center Agencies