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Memorandum

TO: Healthcare Providers

FROM: Larry Madoff, MD, Medical Director, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences
Catherine M. Brown, DVM MSc MPH, State Epidemiologist

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Additional Dose Vaccination Guidance for Immunocompromised Individuals

DATE: August 19, 2021

Dear Healthcare Provider,

On Friday, August 13, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended a third dose of Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for certain individuals. People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised are more likely to have serious disease with COVID-19 and are less likely to develop adequate immunity in response to the two-dose series of Moderna or Pfizer vaccines. Recent data suggest that such individuals may get more protection from a 3rd dose. An additional dose is recommended for people who have already received a primary series with either of the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine and who have moderate to severe immune compromise due to a medical condition or receipt of immunosuppressive medications or treatments. These conditions and treatments include but are not limited to:

- Active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Stem cell transplant within the last 2 years or are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection

- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

It is recommended that such individuals receive an additional dose of the same vaccine given in their primary series. If not available, the other mRNA vaccine may be given.

For more information, please see the CDC's website on Clinical Considerations for Vaccination: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html>

There is currently no recommendation for immune compromised individuals who received the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine to receive an additional dose. There is ongoing investigation of this and will follow up with any additional information.

Also, please note that this recommendation for additional doses of COVID-19 vaccine for immune compromised individuals is distinct from booster doses that may soon be recommended for many individuals at a certain time after primary vaccination. Boosters are NOT currently available, and we are awaiting further guidance from federal authorities.

Because some of your patients may have compromised immune systems and be clinically appropriate for a third dose of Moderna and Pfizer, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) is sharing the following action steps you should take to ensure that all individuals are sufficiently vaccinated.

1. Identify and contact such clinically appropriate individuals using your medical records or electronic health record systems.
2. Offer an additional dose to these individuals at your practice location during routine care or through special vaccination clinics for these individuals.
3. If the patient is unable to come to your practice location for vaccination, encourage additional dosing at a retail pharmacy or any other site for which the patient is eligible using <http://vaxfinder.mass.gov> or <http://www.vaccines.gov>.
4. In-home vaccinations are available for anyone who is unable to get to a vaccine location. Patients or providers may call the In-Home Vaccination Central Intake Line at [\(833\) 983-0485](tel:833-983-0485). Representatives are available Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

As a reminder, any provider who would like to order COVID-19 vaccines must be registered with the MIIS and have a completed Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program (MCVP) agreement. If your practice is not MCVP enrolled, contact the MDPH Vaccine Unit at 617-983-6828 or DPH-Vaccine-Management@mass.gov. All providers receiving COVID-19 vaccine will order vaccine directly from the MIIS and must comply with MCVP guidelines and the following requirements:

- Report doses administered to the MIIS within 24hrs of administration
- Administer all doses within 30 days of receipt
- Agree to [allowable vaccine wastage guidelines](#)

