



Preparing for a COVID-19 Vaccine IDPH Planning & Distribution Workgroup

The Iowa Department of Public Health has convened a stakeholder workgroup, comprised of IMS and other leaders within the provider and public health community, to assist with planning and distribution of an anticipated COVID-19 vaccine. IMS has prepared this meeting summary to quickly convey the latest updates and will continue to provide these regular updates as they become available. Please note, this information is rapidly evolving and may change. Practices are encouraged to contact IMS with any questions about this information.

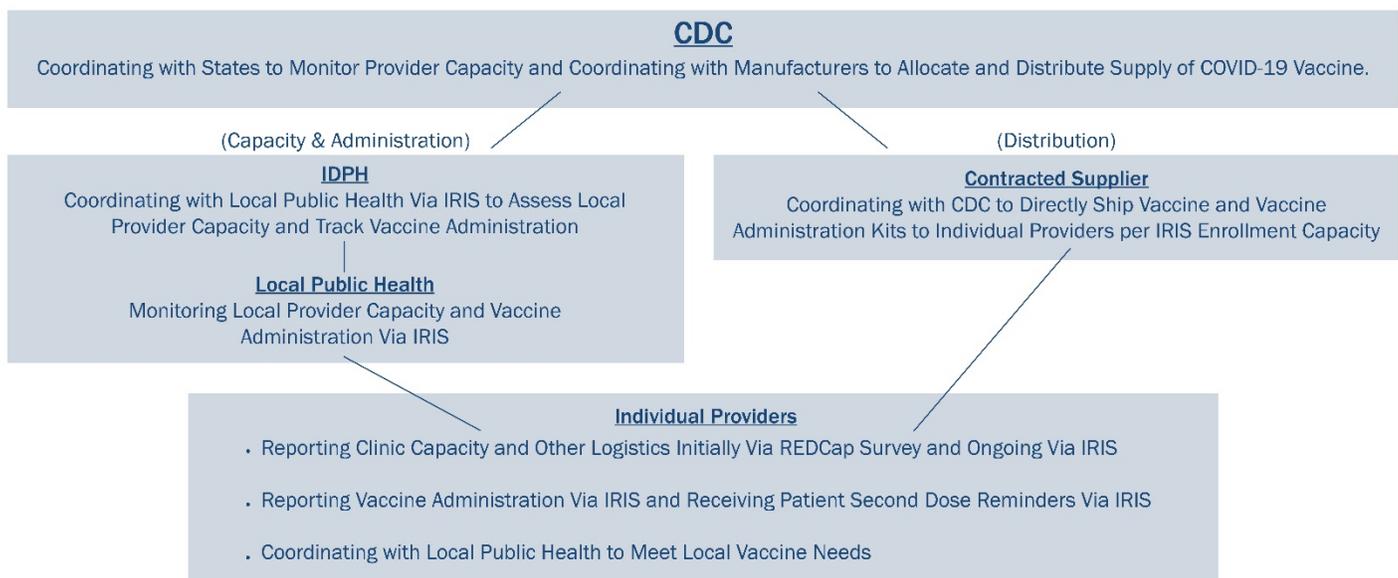
September 23, 2020

On September 23, the workgroup held its initial meeting to discuss state planning efforts and next steps to help prepare the provider and public health community. The state is finalizing its plans for preparation and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as communications and engagement with both the public and provider communities. The workgroup will serve as a component of helping to consistently and rapidly distribute this information.

State COVID-19 Vaccination Plan

Each state is required to submit an initial plan to the CDC by October 16, with plans being finalized by November 1, 2020. Following this, IDPH will be responsible for submitting twice weekly reports to the CDC outlining provider capacity for administering the vaccine, along with additional data elements that will be captured in a forthcoming recap survey and subsequent COVID-19 Vaccination Provider Agreement. Initial allocations of the COVID-19 vaccine are anticipated before the end of the year.

State COVID-19 Vaccination Model



This report is intended for informational purposes only and does not constitute legal guidance. Practices are encouraged to contact their legal counsel and medical liability carrier as they prepare for participation in the COVID-19 vaccine distribution program.

Immediate Provider Preparation Steps

1) Enroll with IRIS

The Immunizations Registry Information System (IRIS) will serve as the backbone for Iowa's COVID-19 vaccine distribution planning and administration tracking. Providers who wish to administer the COVID-19 vaccine must be enrolled with IRIS. If you are not enrolled, please do so immediately. ([Enrollment Information](#)) Once vaccine administration has begun, practices will be required to report all dose administration within 24 hours to ensure the state has near-real-time tracking. IRIS will also facilitate reminder notices for patient second doses should two doses be required, as is the case with several of the leading vaccine candidates.

2) Establish a Connection with Your Local Public Health Department

Local public health agencies will coordinate with IDPH to assess local provider capacity to determine how the state requests allocation of Iowa's supply of the vaccine. They will also be tasked with assessing local needs and patient demand to help route priority patients to a local provider. If you don't already have a line of communication with your local public health department, now is the time to get that established.

3) Complete the Provider REDCap Survey

Next week, IDPH will begin distributing a Research Electronic Data Capture (REDCap) survey via the Hospital Alert Network (HAN) system and directly to all providers enrolled via the IRIS system. This survey, which will be accompanied by additional FAQ materials, will assess local provider capacity amongst those interested in administering the COVID-19 vaccine. Practices will be asked to provide information on primary point of contact, clinic hours, current patient panel demographics to identify priority population patient distribution, weekly vaccine administration capacity, and on-site cold storage capacity.

4) Complete Your COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Agreements

Following completion of the REDCap survey, providers will be asked to complete a COVID-19 Provider Agreement. This agreement will include accepting the terms of the CDC vaccination distribution agreement and indicating whether or not your clinic is accepting new patients for vaccinations. Providers who complete this agreement will then be included in the bi-weekly data reports the state is submitting to the CDC to help ensure sufficient local capacity prior to shipping COVID-19 vaccines directly to individual practice. The CDC is in the process of transitioning its public-facing Flu Finder tool to serve as a COVID-19 Vaccine Finder tool. Providers who have completed their vaccine agreement will be listed in this public portal along with basic contact information and an indication of whether or not the practice is accepting new patients to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Practices will not be required to accept additional patients as a condition of agreeing to administer the COVID-19 vaccine.

5) Evaluate Clinic Sharps Disposal Contracts

The external vendor responsible for shipping doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to individual practices will also be shipping vaccine kits with these orders. The kits will contain 105 needles and syringes, alcohol pads, patient vaccine tracking cards, and a small supply of facemask and other PPE. The kits will not contain sharps containers nor does the state plan to provide for additional containers or disposal of these additional containers. Practices are encouraged to evaluate their sharps disposal contracts to ensure they have sufficient capacity to match the administration capacity they report to IDPH.

Additional Considerations

Patient Prioritization

Final patient prioritization criteria for the limited initial doses of the COVID-19 vaccine may vary based upon the results of the Phase 3 clinical trials. State officials anticipate that Iowa will largely follow the CDC guidelines, laid out in the [COVID-19 Vaccine Program Interim Playbook](#), which prioritize administration to front-line medical workers and seniors in long term care facilities. Upon federal approval of a COVID-19 vaccine, the State Infectious Disease Workgroup along with State Medical Director and Epidemiologist Caitlin Pedati, MD, will determine if any Iowa-specific variations from these guidelines are necessary.

Vaccine Cold Storage

The leading contenders for a COVID-19 vaccination require cold storage well beyond that of a traditional vaccine. Some require storage at -60° to -80° C, while others require storage at -20° C. State and federal officials caution against clinics investing in new cold storage equipment in anticipation of a COVID-19 vaccine. As part of the clinical trials, manufacturers are testing the ability to store these vaccines for a short period of time immediately prior to administration in either a traditional freezer or on dry ice like that which will be used when the vaccines are shipped. Initial indications are that these leading contenders can be safely stored in this manner for a matter of a few days, possibly up to a week. Additional information on storage will be circulated closer to distribution.

Provider Resources

State officials will continue to provide regular updates directly to practices via the HAN and IRIS systems. They will also provide updates to IMS and other stakeholder organizations so that we might serve as an additional resource with high-level contacts to help you navigate this final stage of the pandemic. They have expanded the Vaccine for Children call center to help field provider inquiries and also established a provider email account for direct access to state officials

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IDPH Contacts

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