

UPDATE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Stay informed. Take precautions. Stay safe.

Dear Members,

Last Friday, the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended an additional dose of the mRNA vaccines for protection against COVID-19 for individuals who have moderately to severely compromised immune systems. However, on Wednesday, April 18th, the CDC issued a [statement](#) on plans for an additional booster dose of the Pfizer or Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccine for ***all individuals previously inoculated***. Please note that the boosters are not currently planned for individuals who had previously received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which is currently under evaluation for effectiveness and need for boosters.

A statement issued by James Balda, Argentum President & CEO, explains that the recommendation for boosters would be for administration eight months following an individual's second dose of the vaccine, and potentially beginning the week of September 20th. Argentum and the CDC continue to work closely with federal regulators to develop an efficient and effective plan for booster administration. **Argentum reports that the federal government does not have any plans to reactivate the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program (PPLTCP) at this time. As a result, it may be advisable for ALRs to contact their pharmacy partners to begin planning for COVID-19 booster clinics.** There will be more to come on this, with additional details being made available as plans are confirmed. Argentum's full statement, which also provides links to the CDC statements, can be viewed below.

To: Argentum Owner/Operator Member CEOs, Argentum Industry Partner Member CEOs, Argentum Board of Directors, Argentum State Partners

From: James Balda, Argentum President & CEO

Re: CDC Announces Plans for COVID-19 Booster Doses

****You are encouraged to share this information with your peers and colleagues throughout the industry as you deem appropriate.****

Earlier today, the CDC issued a joint [statement](#) with other federal regulatory agencies on plans for an additional booster dose of the Pfizer or Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccines for all individuals previously inoculated with an mRNA vaccine, subject to the FDA conducting an independent evaluation of its safety and effectiveness. Today's statement follows the [announcements](#) last Friday by CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommending an additional dose of the mRNA vaccines only for those with moderately to severely compromised immune systems.

The initial recommendation for boosters would be for administration eight months after individuals receive their second dose of the vaccine, with booster doses potentially administered as soon as the week of September 20. Boosters would be available to anyone who had previously received an mRNA vaccine. Boosters are not currently planned for those who received the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine; the CDC is continuing to evaluate data on the effectiveness of the J&J vaccine and the need for boosters.

As seniors and workers in long-term care facilities were among the first to receive vaccines based on last year's ACIP recommendations, they will also be among the first to be eligible for boosters based on the proposed 8-month timeframe following their second-dose. CDC data supports the focus on prioritizing long-term care facilities, with a study of 15,000 long-term care facilities showing the effectiveness of the mRNA vaccines dropping from 74% this Spring to 53% by July. A recent study of a third dose of the Pfizer vaccine found it to be 86% effective for people over age 60.

Argentum has been working closely with officials from the CDC in advance of this announcement, and we were on a call with the CDC earlier today specifically to address the needs of senior living communities. **During the call, they advised that the Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program (PPLTCP) would not be reconstituted.** Argentum had sent a [letter](#) to CDC Director Rochelle Walensky on the need to prioritize seniors in congregate care settings and to restart the PPLTCP. While we are disappointed in the decision to not reconstitute the program we will continue to urge the Administration to make available the necessary access, support and resources to administer COVID-19 booster shots to residents and team members.

In the meantime we are in the process of working with our internal workgroups on preparing providers for administering vaccines and considering all potential issues, to include:

- The need for flexibility of administering vaccines at the 8-month mark post-vaccination, so that boosters can be administered as efficiently as possible (i.e., residents or staff who are 7-months post-vaccination).
- The need for providers to begin planning for boosters as soon as possible. Providers should assess resident and staff vaccination dates for booster eligibility and interest; establishing on-site clinics and establishing relationships with LTC pharmacies, local health departments, and/or local retail pharmacies.
- Providers should consider the ability of staff to receive an initial round of vaccines to be in compliance with a company, state, or local vaccine mandate, as supplies may not be as readily available if there's a big rush to get boosters.
- Where possible, boosters may be coordinated with flu clinics that are already scheduled. Providers should be prepared to communicate that boosters are safe to be administered at the same time as other vaccines per current CDC recommendations.

Argentum is closely monitoring developments and continuing to work closely with the CDC and federal regulators on preparing for booster administration. We expect this to remain a fluid situation over the coming weeks as these details are confirmed.

James R. Balda
President & CEO

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