



Dear Members,

As we enter vaccination season, we have a great opportunity to protect our communities and promote health and well-being. Vaccinations for both COVID-19 and influenza are key tools in keeping our residents and staff safe, especially within our assisted living communities. Here are relevant programs and information to support your efforts.

In-Home Vaccination Program (COVID-19/Influenza)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health is offering **in-home vaccinations** for individuals who have difficulty accessing community vaccination sites. This service provides a convenient and safe way for older adults and those with mobility challenges to get vaccinated. Learn more and schedule an appointment [here](#).

Free At-Home COVID-19 Tests Available

Starting in late September, the federal government will once again provide **free at-home COVID-19 tests** to American households through [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov). Each household can request four free tests—an important resource as COVID-19 cases continue to rise.

Massachusetts Vaccine Regulation for Assisted Living

As dedicated caregivers in assisted living, your health and safety are crucial to maintaining a safe environment for both staff and residents. Massachusetts regulations state, “Each Residence shall ensure all personnel are vaccinated against other novel pandemic or novel influenza virus(es) in accordance with guidelines issued by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health.” While it’s true that in Massachusetts, staff members can choose to decline the flu and COVID-19 vaccines, individuals are strongly encouraged to consider the far-reaching benefits of getting vaccinated.

However, those who choose not to vaccinate must adhere to **appropriate preventive measures** in accordance with CDC guidelines. The changes, which became effective on 3/29/24, can be found at [651 CMR 12.06 \(8\)](#). An ALR may not require an individual to receive a vaccine if the individual declines such vaccination. Personnel must sign a statement certifying they are exempt from vaccination and they received information about the risks and benefits of the specific type of vaccine they are declining. A specific reason is no longer required to decline to receive a vaccination. In addition, the Residence must maintain a record of an individual’s vaccination or signed certification refusing the vaccination in his or her personnel files. Read Mass-ALA’s previous update on vaccine regulations [here](#).

Ensuring all residents and staff are informed and supported is essential in maintaining a safe and inclusive environment for everyone. Let’s work together to protect the health and well-being of our community.

If you have any questions, please contact us at Mass-ALA@mass-ala.org.

This update is solely for general informational purposes. It is not intended to replace a full review of the cited regulations or guidance.

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