

December 17, 2020

Dear Illinois Dental Hygienists,

As shared via social media on December 3, 2020, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced that any oral health care provider that provides direct patient care in a dental setting, is considered to be part of the “priority group” under healthcare providers to receive the SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 vaccine first.^{1,2} Early shipments of the vaccine will be prioritized to the 50 Illinois counties with the highest death rates per capita. You can find this list here:

<https://cms8.revize.com/revize/booneil/Departments/health/Press%20Releases%20and%20Daily%20Reports/50%20StateToRecieveVaccineFirst.pdf>

Vaccine will be prepared for shipment to the ten (10) Regional Hospital Coordinating Centers (RHCC) in the state, excluding Chicago.¹ Once the vaccine arrives at the RHCC’s, each Local Health Department, who is receiving a vaccine allotment, will pick up their allotment from their respective RHCC.¹ IDPH will maintain, on a real-time basis, a database inventory of each dose of vaccine that is shipped from the manufacturer or distributor and received at each ship-to site.¹ Ship-to sites will maintain, on a real-time basis, an inventory of vaccine in stock, the manufacturer, lot numbers, expiration dates for each lot, and a record of each dose of vaccine transferred to any clinics designated to conduct the vaccination clinics.¹ COVID-19 vaccination providers will be required to report inventory of COVID-19 vaccines in I-CARE and in VaccineFinder.¹ The City of Chicago will receive a separate, pro rata allocation of SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 vaccine directly from the CDC.¹

Important to note: *Inclusion in Phase 1a is not dependent upon payment for their work or job title.*¹ Situations associated with **higher risk of transmission** include caring for COVID-19 patients, cleaning areas where COVID-19 patients are admitted, treated, and housed, and performing procedures with higher risk of aerosolization such as endotracheal intubation, bronchoscopy, suctioning, turning the patient to the prone position, disconnecting the patient from the ventilator, invasive dental procedures and exams, invasive specimen collection, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.¹ Also included in this group are those individuals distributing the vaccine, such as pharmacists, plasma and blood donation workers, public health nurses, and other public health and emergency preparedness workers.¹ Morticians, funeral home workers, and other death care professionals involved in handling bodies are included in this high-risk group.¹ Please remember that those who are working in the hospitals where COVID-19 patients are being treated, those who are administering the vaccines, and workers/residents in long term care facilities are at the highest risk because of the direct contact with COVID-19, and will be receiving the vaccine first. Please be patient as the vaccine slowly becomes available to the remaining healthcare providers in the 1a group. While we wait for our “names to be called” for the vaccine distribution, check your local health department website to see if there is a sign-up form to be notified of its availability.

References

1. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccination-plan>
2. <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccine-faq>