

COVID-19 VACCINE

Frequently Asked Questions: Resources for Older Adults

Update: April 14, 2021

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) does not oversee the COVID-19 vaccination process but is supporting the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) which is implementing Pennsylvania's COVID-19 vaccination plan.

We recognize that older adults are especially vulnerable during the pandemic and we're doing all we can to help improve the process to get vaccines to older adults. Vaccination is an important step to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and our department wants all older adults to be informed, feel secured, and be prepared to participate in the vaccination process.

Where can I go to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and the vaccination process?

COVID-19 vaccine information is available on the [Department of Health](#) website and through the [Centers for Disease Control](#). The [CDC VaccineFinder tool](#) is available to connect consumers with available vaccine. Information regarding the COVID-19 vaccine should only be taken from reliable and credible sources.

Will older adults be denied services if they refuse to get the COVID-19 vaccine?

The Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and their contracted providers cannot refuse to provide services to older adults who have not been vaccinated for COVID-19.

This may constitute discrimination under either of the following laws:

- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Individuals may not be discriminated against because of race, color, creed, disability, religious affiliation, ancestry, gender, gender identity, sexual

orientation, national origin or age. Further, individuals have the right to make choices and accept risks. When individuals choose not to get the COVID-19 vaccine, the AAA network and contracted providers must make reasonable accommodations to render services in a manner that protects the health and wellness of the staff and the individuals receiving services.

I was able to schedule an appointment, but I need transportation to and from my appointment. How can I find transportation?

Individuals who have been able to schedule an appointment to receive their vaccination can contact the PA Link to arrange for transportation at 1-800-753-8827. Your local AAA may also be able to help you locate transportation to and from your vaccine appointment. To find your AAA, please visit PDA's [Area Agency on Aging Locator](#) or call 211 to be connected to your local Area Agency on Aging.

I'm unable to leave my home to receive my vaccination at a pharmacy or other location. Will someone be able to come to my home to administer the vaccine?

Yes. The Area Agencies on Aging are working with local vaccine providers and other partners to help homebound older adults receive a COVID-19 vaccine in their home. Older adults who are homebound can visit PDA's [Area Agency on Aging Locator](#) or call 211 to be connected to your local AAA.

Homebound individuals under the age of 60 with a disability can call the PA Link at 1-800-753-8827, which is assisting with making necessary arrangements, or call their local Area Agency on Aging, who can assist with a referral to a hospital or health system.

Is the vaccination covered by my health insurance?

For all of the following coverage types, you will not have to pay anything for the vaccine, including a copay, coinsurance, or deductible, regardless of whether the provider is in-network or out-of-network:

- The major-medical health insurance market (individual market health insurance)
- Insurance through your employer (including through COBRA)

- Medicare and Medicare Advantage
- Medicaid through fee-for-service and Managed Care Organizations (MCOs)
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Pennsylvania Employees Benefit Trust Fund (PEBTF)

Your insurance company or health care provider should be able to help you in finding a vaccination location.

For any other questions regarding health care coverage for the vaccine, please visit the [Department of Insurance's](#) website.

How can older adults and adults with disabilities, without internet access, receive vaccine information and assistance with scheduling an appointment for the vaccine?

There are several outlets through which older adults and adults with disabilities, without internet access, can receive vaccine information. PDA understands that it is important to provide easy access to this information. In addition to the resources listed below, older adults and adults with disabilities that do not have internet access can dial 211, Pennsylvania's social services assistance hotline, which can connect anyone to their local Area Agency on Aging.

PACE/PACENET (Pennsylvania's Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly).

PDA is currently providing access to vaccine information for individuals enrolled in the PACE/PACENET programs, which provide pharmaceutical assistance to older adults ages 65 and older. The Department's PACE/PACENET programs have launched a comprehensive assistance and outreach effort to help its 275,000 enrollees obtain vaccines. **If you are a current PACE/PACENET enrollee**, please contact 1-800-424-4326 for information regarding vaccinations.

PA Link (Pennsylvania Link to Aging and Disability Resources)

For older adults and adults with disabilities who do not have access to a computer or internet, the PA Link is providing access to vaccine information, locating access to transportation needs, and assistance in scheduling a vaccination. **If you are an older adult or an adult with disabilities and do not have a computer or access to the internet,** please contact the PA Link at 1-800-753-8827 for assistance.

Area Agencies on Aging

PDA's aging network, comprised of 52 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), is providing assistance regarding the vaccine rollout. **If you are an older adult or know of an older adult in need of assistance,** please visit the [Area Agency on Aging Locator](#) to find the AAA located in your county of residence or dial 211 to be connected to your local Area Agency on Aging via telephone.

PA Health Hotline

If an individual does not have internet access and has questions about the vaccine process, they can call 877-PA-HEALTH to speak with a representative. If an individual is currently eligible, the representative will help the individual locate nearby vaccine providers and provide contact information so the individual can make a vaccine appointment directly with a provider.

I don't need help locating a vaccine, but I am experiencing some mental health struggles due to the pandemic. How can I get help?

Persevere PA is a free COVID-19 crisis hotline designed to link callers with counselors to assist with anxiety, depression and mental health impacts of COVID-19. Reach out to Persevere PA at 1-855-284-2494.

I am deaf or hard of hearing. How do I find information on the vaccine?

When arranging for an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing to receive information via telephone, PA Relay Services are available by dialing 711.

When will I be eligible for the vaccine?

On April 13, all Pennsylvania adults became eligible to schedule an appointment for the COVID-19 vaccine. Adults in Phase 1A who have not yet received their vaccine are still eligible, and the Department of Aging and AAAs will continue to assist vulnerable older adults in getting their vaccine appointments.

Phase 1A includes:

- Adults age 65 and older
- Health care workers
- People with certain pre-existing conditions
- Long-term care facility residents

This didn't answer my question. Who can I contact with questions?

Please feel free to submit your questions to the Pennsylvania Department of Aging by calling at (717)783-1550 or emailing to aging@pa.gov.