



## DEEPER DIVE

# Group 1 – Health Care Workers and Long-Term Care Staff and Residents

### COVID-19 Vaccinations: Your best shot at stopping COVID-19

A tested, safe and effective vaccine will be available to all who want it, but supplies will be limited at first. To save lives and slow the spread of COVID-19, independent state and federal public health advisory committees recommend first protecting health care workers caring for patients with COVID-19, people who are at the highest risk of being hospitalized or dying, and those at high risk of exposure to COVID-19. Keep practicing the 3 W's—wear a mask, wait six feet apart, wash your hands—until everyone has a chance to get vaccinated.

Our goal is to vaccinate as many people as possible given the limited supply of vaccines. North Carolina moves through vaccination groups by aligning to federal priorities while empowering local health departments and hospitals with flexibility to move to the next priority group as they complete groups and have vaccine available.

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Health Care Workers and Long-term Care Staff and Residents

ACTIVE GROUP

**Group 1: The goal is to protect the health care workers and North Carolinians who are at the highest risk of being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19.**

Health care workers in Group 1 are those with in-person patient contact. Health care workers in this group are defined as paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients, bodies, or infectious materials. This group also includes individuals who are involved in COVID-19 vaccination efforts, including health care personnel and volunteers supporting vaccination efforts.

Health care settings include, but are not limited to, settings such as:

- hospitals
- long-term care facilities
- outpatient clinics
- vaccination sites
- home health care
- public health clinical services
- emergency medical services
- mortuaries
- pharmacies

Health care workers comprise clinical staff members, including nursing or medical assistants and support staff members (e.g., those who work in food, environmental, and administrative services) and pharmacies.

Health care workers with in-person patient contact can include but are not limited to:

- Behavioral health providers
- Blood banks workers
- Chiropractors
- Community health workers
- Dental hygienists
- Dentists
- Dialysis centers
- Diagnostic and therapeutic technicians
- EMTs/paramedics
- Environmental services staff
- Food services staff
- Front desk administrative staff
- Health care trainees (e.g., medical students, pharmacy students, nursing students)
- Home health aides and workers
- Hospice homes
- Laboratory staff
- Medical Interpreter
- Morticians/funeral home staff
- Nurses
- Nursing aides, techs, and assistants
- Nurse Practitioners
- Optometrists
- Personal care aides
- Pharmacists
- Pharmacy techs
- Phlebotomists
- Physicians
- Physicians Assistants
- Physical, occupational, and speech therapists
- Podiatrists
- Public health and emergency workers
- Public health nurses
- Respiratory techs
- Syringe Exchange Providers

**LONG-TERM CARE STAFF AND RESIDENTS** include people and staff the following settings:

- adult care homes/assisted living
- family care homes
- group homes
- skilled nursing facilities
- mental health group homes
- continuing care retirements communities
- in-patient hospice facilities

## How do health care workers in this first group get their vaccine?

Local Health Departments, health care employers, hospitals and health systems, long-term care pharmacies, clinics and other enrolled vaccinating providers all play a role in vaccinating health care workers in Group 1. Eventually, any vaccine provider enrolled in the state's COVID-19 Vaccine Management System and who is administering vaccines may vaccinate Group 1, since eligible individuals can continue to be vaccinated as North Carolina moves to additional vaccination phases.

Local Health Departments, health care employers, hospitals and health systems, and clinics all play a role in vaccinating health care workers in Group 1.

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS** should:

- Coordinate with local health care employers to vaccinate their eligible employees
- Coordinate with hospitals, health systems and other local vaccine providers to ensure the most timely access to vaccinations for eligible health care workers

**HEALTH CARE EMPLOYERS** should:

- Contact their local health department to coordinate vaccination opportunities for their employees
- Understand that the ability for Local Health Departments to schedule appointments will depend on the supply of vaccine available

**HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS** should:

- Vaccinate non-employed or non-affiliated community-based health care workers in addition to their own eligible employees
- Work with the Local Health Department to coordinate access to vaccine for non-affiliated health care workers

## **How do long-term care staff and residents get their vaccine?**

The federal government manages vaccinations for most staff and residents of long-term care facilities through the newly created Pharmacy Partnership for Long-Term Care Program with CVS and Walgreens. Staff and residents will be vaccinated at the same time. Other long-term care staff and residents will receive vaccinations through their Local Health Departments and other long-term care pharmacies if not participating in the federal program. North Carolina is working to enroll other vaccinating providers who may also reach this population.