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SPECIAL EDITION

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CMS Expanding Efforts to Grow COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence & Uptake Amongst Nation's Most Vulnerable

CMS Builds on Whole-of-Government COVID-19 Response with Vaccination Education, Offering, and Reporting

As part of the ongoing response to address the COVID-19 pandemic and to improve health care access and reduce the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19, CMS issued a rule that will ensure long-term care facilities, and residential facilities serving clients with intellectual disabilities, educate and offer the COVID-19 vaccine to residents, clients, and staff. These requirements apply to Long-Term Care (LTC) facilities and Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICFs-IID) and align with existing requirements for influenza and pneumococcal vaccines in LTC facilities.

The rule also requires LTC facilities to report weekly COVID-19 vaccination status data for both residents and staff. The new vaccination reporting requirement will not only assist in monitoring uptake amongst residents and staff but will also aid in identifying facilities that may be in need of additional resources and/or assistance to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"These new requirements reinforce CMS' commitment of ensuring equitable vaccine access for Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries," said Dr. Lee Fleisher, MD, CMS Chief Medical Officer and Director of CMS' Center for Clinical Standards and Quality (CCSQ). "Today's announcement directly aids nursing home residents and people with intellectual or developmental disabilities who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Our goal is to increase COVID-19 vaccine confidence and acceptance among these individuals and the staff who serve them."

To ensure LTC facilities receive support for COVID-19 vaccination efforts, they are now required to report weekly vaccination data of residents and staff to the CDC [National Healthcare Safety Network \(NHSN\)](#), the nation's most widely used health care-associated infection tracking system. LTC facilities are already required to report COVID-19 testing, case, and mortality data to the NHSN for residents and staff but have not been required to report vaccination data. As data becomes available, CMS will post facility-specific vaccination status information reported to the NHSN for viewing by facilities, stakeholders, and the public on CMS' COVID-19 [Nursing Home Data](#) website.

While this announcement is specific to LTC facilities and ICFs-IID, CMS is also seeking comment on opportunities to expand these policies to help encourage vaccine uptake and access in other congregate care settings, such as psychiatric residential treatment facilities, group homes, and assisted living facilities. By requiring vaccine education and offering within LTC facilities and ICFs-IIDs, CMS is improving health care access and reducing the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19.

More Information:

- [Interim final rule](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Immunization Requirements for Residents and Staff](#)

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