



May 11, 2021

Dear Administrator:

While the FDA authorized the Pfizer vaccine for use in people ages 12 to 15, the next step is for CDC to determine whether the agency will recommend the vaccine's use in this new group. We expect the CDC announcement to come later this week. To consider vaccination, many families will require information and encouragement from community organizations they know. As trusted community leaders, we are calling on you to help inform students and families about vaccination options for young people.

We strongly encourage districts to host a vaccination event at one or more schools before the end of the school year to visibly support vaccination and leverage the school community to improve vaccine uptake. To do this, we suggest you partner with a community vaccine provider such as:

- Local Health Department (LHD): Your LHD may be able to support you in hosting a vaccination event or provide you with information on other community vaccination events for youth and families. You can check your LHD website or [call/email your LHD administrator](#).
- Pharmacies: You can reach out to a local pharmacy to request a school-based vaccination event.
 - Costco: Beth Arnold — Betharnold@costco.com
 - CVS: <https://cvshhealth.com/covid-19/return-ready/vaccination>
 - Jewel-Osco: Jay Highland — Jay.Highland@jewelosco.com
 - Hy-Vee: Justin Manning — jmanning@hy-vee.com
 - Walgreens: Chelsi McManus — Chelsi.McManus@walgreens.com/224-256-9037
 - Walmart: Carrie Wiggins — Carrie.wiggins@walmart.com/618-499-6231
 - Additional pharmacies can be found on the State or CDC website if your preferred location is not listed above.
- Hospitals: Many Illinois hospitals have vaccine and may be able to support on-site events.
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs): FQHCs are community-based care providers that provide primary care services in underserved areas. You can contact your local FQHC to request an on-site vaccination event.

If you are unable to develop a partnership at the local level to host a school clinic, but would like to do so, please contact Cody.Mcsellers-Mccray@Illinois.gov at the Illinois Department of Public Health. The Department may be able to work with you to plan an event with a vendor contracted by the state or connect you with another available community partner. Please also contact Cody with any other questions related to COVID-19 vaccination for youth.

If you choose not to conduct an on-site clinic, please send the [Parent Letter](#) from ISBE to students and families on where to get vaccinated, or feel free to use or adapt the letter to send on behalf of the District. Finally, we have also attached a one-pager for school staff on how to talk about the vaccine.

We hope that the coming months will be healthy ones, allowing students, teachers, and families to enjoy the down time of the summer months and prepare schools for a year ahead that ensures students are able to focus on what's most important — learning.

We are grateful for your continued support to keep your schools and communities safe.



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
www.isbe.net

Darren Reisberg
Chair of the Board

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

May 11, 2021

Dear Parents:

Many students and families are anxiously awaiting the summer ahead after a year filled with new challenges and uncertainties. While COVID-19 has brought about changes, the crucial role vaccinations play in keeping children, their classmates, and communities safe remains unchanged. Since the start of the pandemic, over 200,000 children in Illinois have been infected with COVID-19. We hope that the months ahead will be healthy ones, free of vaccine-preventable disease.

Schools with lower rates of vaccination are more likely to see outbreaks which can lead to time away from school in addition to more serious consequences for the health of children and families. [The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has strongly expressed their support for approved COVID-19 vaccines in younger children and adolescents as “key, safe mechanisms that protect individuals and populations against many infectious diseases”.

While the FDA authorized the Pfizer vaccine for use in people ages 12 to 15, the next step is for CDC to determine whether the agency will recommend the vaccine’s use in this new group. We expect the CDC announcement to come later this week. We are providing a list of resources below on vaccine availability, safety, and other common questions.

Where can my child receive a vaccine?

- **School:** Many schools will be offering free school-based vaccination events. We encourage all unvaccinated students and their family members to take advantage of these events if you receive a letter from your child’s school informing you there will be one available near you.
- **Hospital or Primary Care Provider:** Many Illinois hospitals, primary care providers, and pediatrician offices are providing COVID-19 vaccines. You can reach out to your child’s primary care provider to see if they have appointments available.
- **Pharmacies:** There are over 1,000 pharmacies across the state administering COVID-19 vaccine. Families can search [Vaccines.gov](#) by the “Pfizer” filter to identify area pharmacies with available appointments providing vaccines approved for young people.
- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs):** FQHCs are community-based care providers that provide primary care services in underserved areas. You can [contact your local FQHC](#) to see if they have available appointments for your child. Services are offered on a sliding payment scale.
- **Local Health Department (LHD):** Your Local Health Department may host a vaccination event specifically for students and families. Check your Health Department’s website for updates.

Where can I learn more about the COVID-19 Vaccine?

- [The Science Behind COVID-19: Parent FAQs](#) (American Academy of Pediatrics)
- [Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#) (Center for Disease Control)
- Illinois’ [Coronavirus website](#), which includes a [comprehensive list of state vaccine locations](#).

We appreciate you doing your part to keep schools and communities safe.