Recommendations Regarding Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Dose

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TO: Health Alert Network
FROM: Alison V. Beam, JD, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT: Recommendations regarding Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Dose

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This transmission is a “Health Advisory,” and provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

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EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE;
FQHCs: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE
LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE;
PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP;
LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

SUMMARY
• CDC Guidance released on September 24, 2021 recommends that patients who received the full course of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine 6 months ago or longer may be eligible for a booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTechCOVID-19 vaccine.
• The booster dose should be provided to the following populations:
  o People aged 65 and over
  o Residents of long-term care facilities who are 18 years and older
  o People aged 50-65 years of age with underlying medical conditions
• The booster dose may be provided to the following populations:
  o People aged 18-49 years with underlying medical conditions
  o People aged 18-64 at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission due to occupational or institutional setting.
• The dose for the booster is the same as the dose for the original series
• Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is the only COVID-19 vaccine with a recommended booster dose.
• Recommendations regarding providing an additional dose to moderately to severely immunocompromised people can be found in PA HAN 587.
• If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.
Background

On September 24, 2021 the CDC reviewed the current data about the continuing effectiveness of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine and recommended a booster dose of the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for certain populations.

Recommendations

- The booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine **should** be given to the following populations:
  - People aged 65 and over
  - Residents of long-term care facilities who are 18 years of age and older
  - People aged 50-65 years of age with the following **underlying medical conditions**:
    - Cancer, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes mellitus (type 1 and 2), heart conditions, obesity, pregnancy, and recent pregnancy
- A booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine **may** be given to the following populations:
  - People aged 18-49 with **underlying medical conditions** that put them at risk
  - People aged 18-64 at increased risk to COVID-19 exposure and transmission due to occupational or institutional setting
    - **Examples include**: Healthcare workers, teachers, food and agricultural workers, manufacturing workers, corrections workers, US Postal Service workers, public transit workers, and grocery store workers
- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster dose should be given 6 months or later after completion of the primary series
- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster dose is the same as the primary series dose: 0.3ml via intramuscular injection
- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster dose may be given in conjunction with other vaccines without regard to timing including on the same day
- **Contraindications** for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster dose are as follows:
  - Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) after a previous dose or to a component of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine
  - Immediate allergic reaction of any severity to a previous dose or known allergy to a component of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine
- Myocarditis after a dose of an mRNA vaccine is not an absolute contraindication; however, the booster dose should be deferred until myocarditis has completely resolved
- The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster dose is **not** authorized for anyone under the age of 18 regardless of medical condition or occupation
- Anyone who has completed their primary series of COVID-19 vaccination is considered fully vaccinated, regardless of whether they have received the booster dose
- There have been no recommendations regarding a booster dose for the Moderna or Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines. People who received those vaccines as their primary series are not eligible for a booster dose with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at this time.
- Recommendations regarding proving additional doses to moderately to severely immunocompromised people can be found in **PA HAN 587**.

If you have any questions, please call PA DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

- **Health Alert**: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
- **Health Advisory**: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- **Health Update**: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of October 4, 2021 but may be modified in the future.