



NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

covid.media@illinois.gov

Vaccination Sites Across Illinois Ready to Administer Pfizer-BioNTech Vaccine to Youths Ages 12 through 15

State mass vaccination sites, local health departments, and providers offering Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today announced vaccination locations across the state are prepared to administer the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to youth ages 12 through 15 years after the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices (ACIP) voted today to recommend its use. The announcement comes following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recent expansion of the emergency use authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in those youths.

“The expanded use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine brings us one step closer to getting back to our daily lives and ending this pandemic,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Our state-supported mass vaccination locations, along with local health departments and other providers, are ready to vaccinate young people immediately, providing kids and families with a sense of relief after a difficult year.”

Previously, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was authorized for use in individuals ages 16 years and older. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is administered as a series of two doses, three weeks apart, for all eligible individuals.

“The goal is to vaccinate as many Illinoisans as possible to decrease new cases of disease and prevent mutation to more dangerous variants,” **said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike**. “The expanded authorization for use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in youth ages 12 through 15 years will not only help protect our younger population, it will help us get back to in-person learning across the state.”

COVID-19 vaccinations for those 12 years and older are available at state-supported mass vaccination and mobile clinics, local health departments, pharmacies, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and from other providers who offer the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. IDPH is working to enroll pediatricians into the State immunization registry so they can administer COVID-19 vaccine to their patients. Additionally, schools may partner with the local health department or pharmacy to set up vaccination clinics for students.

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Individuals should check with their local health department or health care provider about whether a parent or guardian must be present for an individual under the age of 18 to receive the vaccine, or whether some other form of written consent is required.

In clinical trials, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine was found to be 100% effective in preventing COVID-19 among participants ages 12 through 15 years. The side effects in adolescents were similar with those reported in clinical trial participants 16 years of age and older and included pain at the injection site, tiredness, headache, chills, muscle and joint pain, and fever.

According to the FDA, at this time, there are limited data to address whether the vaccine can prevent transmission of the virus from person to person and how long the vaccine will provide protection.

Pfizer Inc. will continue to monitor the safety of the vaccine and will be required to report to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, along with providers, all serious adverse events, cases of Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome, cases that result in hospitalization or death, and vaccine administration errors. This is the same system that was able to quickly identify a small number of adverse events that have been associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Both the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) COVID-19 vaccines are authorized for use in individuals 18 years and older and will continue to be available to adults.

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