

Policy Brief: COVID-19 Vaccine Administration

Purpose

To provide guidance on the administration of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Context

As the U.S. prepares for the largest vaccine initiative in decades, boards of nursing (BONs) are ready to assist in this effort by providing recommendations regarding COVID-19 vaccine administration. It is essential that the public not only trust the vaccine, but also the care provider administering it. Safety of a vaccine extends beyond its pharmaceutical properties. The vaccine must be administered by individuals who are competent in all aspects of vaccine administration. This includes knowledge of the informed consent process, injection administration technique, vaccine reconstitution, storage requirements, side effects, emergency management of adverse reactions, record-keeping, waste and disposal and all other aspects of vaccine administration outlined in [The COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Operational Guidance for Jurisdictions Playbook](#).

The COVID-19 vaccine will be administered to millions of people in a short time frame to get control of the virus and save lives. Many rural areas of the country have a significant shortage of nurses, while highly populated areas may not have an adequate number of nurses necessary to accommodate the volume of vaccine recipients. For these reasons the following is proposed:

Proposal

- COVID-19 vaccines can be safely administered by licensed practical nurses/vocational nurses (LPNs/VNs), registered nurses (RNs) and advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), in addition to other licensed health care providers such as physicians, physician assistants and pharmacists.
- If needed, states should call upon retired nurses and those who have inactive licenses with no discipline on their records to assist in vaccine administration. States should work with their state BON to determine the most efficient method to reinstate those licenses.
- Partnerships with nursing education programs are encouraged. Student nurses who have been taught the principles of COVID-19 vaccine administration may do so under the supervision of faculty or other appropriate licensed practitioners.
- Waivers by the governor or BON may be necessary to authorize an RN or LPN/VN to delegate vaccine administration to certified medical assistants, medication aides and emergency medical technicians/paramedics that have been trained in COVID-19 informed consent, vaccine administration, COVID-19 vaccine side effects, emergency management of adverse reactions and the principles of reconstitution and proper storage.

Benefits

The enormity of the need for highly competent, safe and accessible COVID-19 vaccine administration calls for an expanded workforce to provide this important service. These recommendations extend nursing services beyond the RN, LPN and APRN to acknowledge the ability of other health care professionals and nursing students to participate in this effort.

Recommendations

- All nurses volunteering for COVID-19 vaccine administration who are not affiliated with an institution providing the vaccine should have their license verified through Nursys.com.
- Retired and inactive nurse records can also be found in Nursys.com.
- Nurses should also be involved in educating the public about the importance and safety of the vaccine to ensure high participation from the public. This is essential to eliminating COVID-19 in the U.S.
- All individuals administering the vaccine must be competent in the informed consent process, COVID-19 vaccine administration, vaccine reconstitution, storage requirements, side effects, emergency management of adverse reactions, record-keeping, waste and disposal and all other aspects of vaccine administration outlined in [The COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Operational Guidance for Jurisdictions Playbook](#).

About NCSBN

Founded March 15, 1978, as an independent not-for-profit organization, NCSBN was initially created to lessen the burdens of state governments and bring together nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs) to act and counsel together on matters of common interest. It has evolved into one of the leading voices of regulation across the world.

NCSBN's membership is comprised of the NRBs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and four U.S. territories — American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and the Virgin Islands. There are three exam user members. There are also 27 associate members that are either NRBs or empowered regulatory authorities from other countries or territories.

Mission: NCSBN empowers and supports nursing regulators in their mandate to protect the public.