

THE QUARTERLY CONNECTION



Quarterly Report from Pharma-Care, Inc. / Creative Care Consulting

Fourth Quarter 2022

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Updated COVID-19 Boosters Available

The CDC has endorsed the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation for updated COVID-19 boosters that add Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 spike protein components to the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine composition. These updated COVID-19 boosters offer stronger protection against severe illness and death from Omicron sub-variants.

The CDC is re-framing the definition of what it means to be up-to date with COVID-19 vaccination. Individuals are up to date if they have a completed a primary series and received the most recent booster dose recommended by the CDC.

Individuals ages 12 and older are encouraged to get a COVID-19 bivalent booster dose which should be received two months after their most recent booster or primary vaccination series.

- The new Pfizer bivalent booster is recommended for all individuals ages 12 and older.
- The Moderna bivalent booster is recommended for those ages 18 and older.

Monovalent mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are NO LONGER authorized for use as boosters in people ages 12 years and older.

Individuals should not receive a bivalent booster without first completing a primary series.

Providers should continue to administer the monovalent boosters to children 5 through 11 years of age who are eligible since the bivalent booster is not yet authorized for this age group.

COVID-19 vaccines may be administered without regard to timing of other vaccines. COVID-19 vaccines can be co-administered with the influenza vaccine at the same visit.

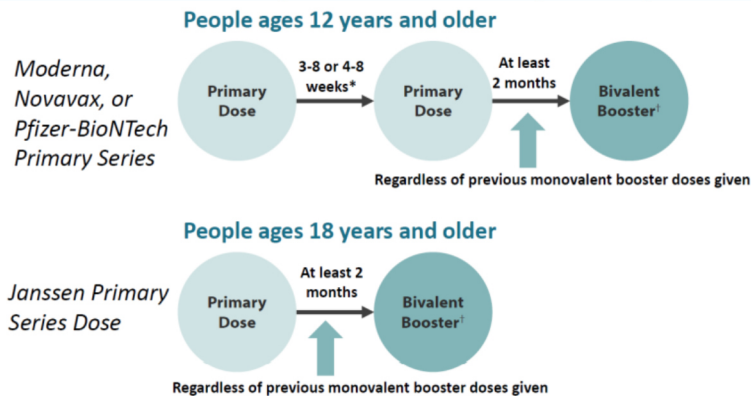
Disclaimer: COVID-19 information is current as of September 9, 2022. Recommendations subject to change based on guidance from the CDC and ACIP.

Simplified Vaccination Schedule

Vaccination history	→	Next dose
Primary series	At least 2 months →	1 bivalent booster dose
Primary series + 1 booster	At least 2 months →	1 bivalent booster dose
Primary series + 2 booster	At least 2 months →	1 bivalent booster dose

Detailed Vaccination Schedules (based on if patient is immunocompromised):

COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule for People who are NOT Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised



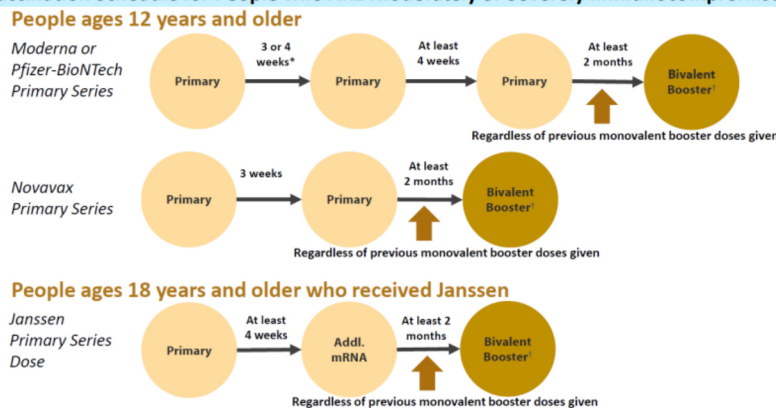
NOTES:

*3-8 interval for Novavax and Pfizer-BioNTech; 4-8 interval for Moderna

† The bivalent booster dose is administered at least 2 months after completion of the primary series.

For people who previously received a monovalent booster dose(s), the bivalent booster dose is administered at least 2 months after the last monovalent booster dose. The bivalent booster should be age appropriate; Pfizer-BioNTech is authorized for people ages 12 years and older and Moderna is authorized for people 18 years and older.

COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule for People who ARE Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised



Contact Pharma-Care to set up a COVID-19 booster clinic.

The New Jersey Department of Health has requested Pharma-Care, Inc. to work with and assist in the COVID-19 booster vaccination program to all health care facilities. For additional information on how Pharma-Care can help your facility, please contact:

Maureen Ziegler, Asst Director Education
 Booster Clinic Coordinator
mziegler@pharmacareinc.com
 732-943-3527 or 732-574-9015 x 105

It's Flu Season!!



A few things are different for the 2022-2023 influenza (flu) season, including:

- The [composition of flu vaccines](#) has been updated.
- For the 2022-2023 flu season, there are three flu vaccines that are preferentially recommended for people 65 years and older:
 - [Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine](#),
 - [Flublok Quadrivalent recombinant flu vaccine](#)
 - [Fluad Quadrivalent adjuvanted flu vaccine](#).
- The recommended timing of vaccination is similar to last season. For most people who need only one dose for the season, September and October are generally good times to get vaccinated. Vaccination in July and August is not recommended for most adults but can be considered for some groups. While ideally it's recommended to get vaccinated by the end of October, it's important to know that vaccination after October can still provide protection during the peak of flu season.

New Drugs In the Spotlight



Kerendia (*finerenone*) is a once-daily tablet that is proven to slow the progression of kidney damage and reduce the risk of cardiovascular death, heart attack and hospitalization for heart failure in adults with CKD in T2D.

Mechanism of action: non-steroidal mineralocorticoid receptor antagonist (MRA)

The starting dose is 10mg or 20mg daily, depending on kidney function and potassium level. The target daily dose is 20mg daily.

Kerendia should not be initiated in a patient if the potassium level is greater than 5.0 mEq/L.

May be taken with or without food, tablets may be crushed

Controlled Substance Documentation Checklist:

- Update medical director as CDS license for the facility - expires every year on **October 31st**
- Medical director DEA license (federal) up to date (expires after 3 years)
- Biennial inventory of controlled substances in back-up every 2 years
- Controlled substance back-up accountability check performed by two licensed nurses and documented at least once daily
- Periodically review DEA 222 forms to ensure that they are being filled out completely
- Do not have any pre-signed 222 forms by medical director (use immediately or void and file in order)

Contact Pharma-Care, Inc for a review of controlled substances by your pharmacy consultant. Full narcotic audits may be available for your facility if needed. 732-574-9015



Revised Long-Term Care Surveyor Guidance

(effective October 24, 2022)



F755 -Pharmacy Services:

- Clarification for disposal of fentanyl patches. Two nurses should witness the destruction of each fentanyl patch using a drug disposal system, such as Drug Buster and document according to facility policy. Flushing is okay as per manufacturer unless banning by local and/or state regulations.

F758- Psychotropic Medications:

- CMS revised guidance addressing medications not defined as psychotropic medications but that affect brain activity and can also have adverse consequences. The use of these “other medications” is subject to the psychotropic medication requirements if the documented use appears to be a substitution for another psychotropic medication rather than for the original or approved indication.
- CMS also revised guidance for the psychotropic medication gradual dose reduction.
- Potential Inaccurate Diagnosis and/or Assessment: revised guidance to investigate situations where practitioners or facilities may have potentially inaccurately diagnosed and/or coded a resident with schizophrenia in the resident assessment instrument.

Pharma-Care's consulting services to long-term care facilities started many years ago. In that span of time the company has expanded the scope of services to the community in all areas of healthcare including the following: Long-Term Care/Skilled Nursing Facilities • 48 hour Review of Medication for New Admissions and Re-Admissions • Antibiotic Stewardship Reviews • Assisted Living/Personal Care Facilities • Ambulatory Surgery Centers • Dialysis Centers • Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation • Pediatric and Adult Medical Day Care • Medication Therapy Management • Disease State Management • COVID-19 Vaccinations Clinics (Pfizer or Moderna) • COVID-19 PCR Testing • Mock Survey-Preparedness, Education and Audit.

To discover how some of these services may benefit your facility call our corporate office and speak to one of our area managers: 732-574-9015



EPIC Corner

ELECTRONIC PHARMACIST INFORMATION CONSULTANT
(MEDICATION REVIEWS WITHIN 48 BUSINESS HOURS)

EPIC Phone: 732-943-3573

EPIC Fax: 732-574-3469 or 3926

Email: epic@pharmacareinc.com

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO PROCESS YOUR REQUEST EFFICIENTLY:

1. For facilities still using the Fax-In process, please check and only fax one resident review per transmission. Please do not group multiple residents together in one transmission as this may delay a review. Also, remember to use the EPIC Services cover-sheet to insure proper queuing in our system. [Download Blank Coversheet.](#)
2. Please note that when a review is completed and sent back through email, a recipient will not see other recipients email CC'd, since our fax server sends each email individually as if the review were going to a single faxing device.

Did you know that EPIC also offers two other services in addition to reviewing medications for new admissions and readmissions?

These are the two other services:

Change of Status

Residents who experience a change of status as defined by the federal guidelines such as falls, bleeding, and mental status changes can have their medications reviewed.

Antibiotic Stewardship

This review addresses the use of antibiotics to improve resident outcome and possibly reduce adverse events.

If EPIC has EMAR access to your facility, please remind the nurses DO NOT FAX IN A REQUESTS FOR NEW ADMISSIONS AND/OR READMISSIONS, only for Change of Status and Antibiotic Stewardship (if your facility utilizes these types of EPICs.)

Please make sure your fax machine is sending over legible information. Many times, EPIC receives requests with blank lines going through the pages which makes it difficult to read. If your not sure, send a fax from one device to another device at your facility and review.

EPIC has 4 fax numbers:
(732) 574-3469
(732) 574-3926
(732) 943-3571
(732) 943-3572

If one of those numbers is busy, please go to the next. We have multiple facilities faxing in throughout the day.

Please reach out to the EPIC Department with any concerns or questions about services at (732) 943-3573.

STATE SURVEY TRENDS

F755 – Pharmacy Services

- Expired medication on med cart, treatment cart, med room.
- DEA 222 forms not filled in correctly.
- DEA forms not filled in completely when medications received (teams are looking closely at all areas concerning ordering, receiving, storing and handling of CDS).
- Facility (MD and nursing) not responding to Pharmacist consultant reports.
- Recommend a policy and procedure on distribution and follow-up.

F759 – Medication Errors

- Wrong dose of medication administered.
- Incorrect dosage form sent from pharmacy and was being used.
- Medication incorrectly crushed.
- Medication administered without regard to cautionary labeling.
- Medication administered late.
- Leaving medication at bedside.
- Signing prior to administration.

F583 – (Privacy)

- Curtains not pulled during med pass and lab draws.

F760 – Significant medication error.

- Error had been corrected and all notifications and documentation were in place.

F686 – (Standards of Practice)

- Late medications(not significant enough to be counted as a med error).
- Unnecessary finger sticks.
- Incorrect wound care procedures.

F698 – Dialysis

- Communication logs incomplete.
- Vital sign documentation after dialysis session.

F880 – Infection Control

- Gloves not being used at appropriate times.
- Incorrect hand-washing procedures during med pass and treatments.

30:13-18 Regulations

- Facilities continue to be cited for not meeting staffing ratios.
- Other issues addressed during recent surveys:
 - Narcotic – count shift to shift blanks.
 - Daily back up count for Narcotics not being done.
 - Incomplete monitoring with the use of Psychoactive medications.
 - Questions raised regarding psych meetings.
 - Omissions for documentation of daily temperature reading for medication fridges.



**BE SURVEY
READY
EVERY DAY!**

Since 1976, Pharma-Care, Inc. has been setting the standard in the field of consultant pharmacy. Our pharmacy consultants provide services to a variety of health care facilities. Our consultants are continually kept abreast of the latest developments on drug interactions along with clinical outcomes, quality assurance, and state and Federal regulations.

Let our team of experts help you to provide the highest level of quality care and have that reflected in your outcomes, STAR rating and survey results.

The Reasons Your Nursing Facility Needs Our Mock Survey

During these trying times it is often difficult to always operate at the highest possible level; sometimes it takes a fresh set of eyes to evaluate and mend breakdowns in processes. Here are just a few reasons why engaging with Pharma-Care's consulting group for your facility's mock survey needs is the best way for you to prepare for survey. Pharma-Care has an interdisciplinary team of certified consultants working with nursing homes, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation centers, and other healthcare providers throughout the state. We utilize the same checklist as the actual survey team, giving you the ability to correct potential deficiencies before your survey, and have the foundation in place to provide the highest level of quality care.

Our team will work collaboratively with yours to determine the specific needs of your facility. We will work with you and your team to not only discover any areas of concern but also come up with and help implement solutions.

- Full or Focused Mock Survey
- Review past surveys (deficiencies & plans of corrections)
- Review quality measures & quality indicators
- Provide Pre and Post survey education to your staff
- Medication Reconciliation
- Documentation Review (wound, restraint, etc.)
- Assist with writing Plans of Corrections and developing audit tools
- Assist with culture change (doing the right thing the first time)

Review and/or Recommend:

- Changes to policies
- Infection Control practices
- Accident and investigation reports
- Process changes in other departments (dietary, housekeeping, maintenance, etc.)

OTHER SERVICES MAY BE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

**CONTACT PHARMA-CARE TODAY AT (732) 574-9015, EXT 105
TO SCHEDULE A COLLABORATIVE ONSITE FACILITY ASSESSMENT**



Pharma-Care, Inc.
Health Care Consultation Specialists
WWW.PHARMACAREINC.COM

BOOTH #407



Visit us at the
**74th Annual HCANJ
Conference & Expo**

October 25 & 26
Harrah's Waterfront Conference Center
Atlantic City, New Jersey

**Stop by and ask us about our
on-site Covid-19 Booster Clinic**

**Merry Christmas
Happy Hanukkah
Happy Kwanzaa
Happy Holidays to you all!**

Our Corporate Offices will be closed on:
Monday, December 26th in Observance of Christmas Day



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