

**Date: May 7, 2021**  
**To: Iowa Enrolled COVID–19 Vaccine Providers**  
**From: Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)**  
**Re: COVID-19 Vaccine Access and Wastage Guidance**

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As COVID-19 vaccine supply is more available, and opportunities to vaccinate Iowa residents may become more sporadic, focus should shift towards ensuring vaccination of all eligible persons even at the risk of wasting unused doses. The Department is aware some patients may prefer to be vaccinated at their primary source of care, rather than attending mass immunization events. The Department supports and encourages efforts to administer vaccine to these individuals and is providing updated guidance on COVID-19 vaccine wastage.

Additionally, there will be a national focus on making COVID-19 vaccine more accessible. Pharmacies participating in the federal pharmacy program will begin to offer walk-in appointments; the CDC is encouraging smaller community vaccination sites, and more mobile clinics. The Department recommends every effort is made to vaccinate eligible persons who present at a vaccine clinic location. A multi-dose vial may be punctured to vaccinate one or more persons who present for vaccination. Ultimately, the remaining doses of vaccine in the vial may need to be wasted. At this point in Iowa's pandemic response, it is more critical to ensure people who want to be vaccinated are able to do so.

The Immunization Program is expecting increases in vaccine wastage as the vaccination effort in Iowa evolves. Healthcare providers will not be penalized for reporting an increased number of unused doses in vials. The CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Program Provider Agreement requires providers to report the number of doses wasted, unused, spoiled, or expired to IRIS. Healthcare providers can use the [Adjusting COVID-19 Vaccine Inventory for Wastage](#) instructions to account for wasted doses. IRIS staff are available to help manage IRIS inventory and capture vaccine wastage correctly by calling 800-374-3958.

The Department appreciates healthcare provider's continued efforts to vaccinate Iowa residents and remains committed to working with partners across the state to ensure everyone is aware of, and has access to, COVID-19 vaccine. Healthcare provider questions regarding COVID-19 vaccine can be directed to the COVID-19 Vaccine Call Center at 1-800-831-6293 ext. 1 or emailed to [COVID19Vaccine@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:COVID19Vaccine@idph.iowa.gov). IRIS questions may be directed to the IRIS Help Desk at 800-374-3958.