

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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February 12, 2021

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE 01-021221: CONTACTING CONSUMERS
REGARDING ELIGIBILITY FOR COVID-19 VACCINATION

Welfare and Institutions (W&I) Code section 4639.6 authorizes the Director of the Department of Developmental Services (Department) to issue directives to regional centers as the Director deems necessary to protect consumer rights, health, safety, or welfare, or in accordance with W&I Code section 4434. Regional centers must comply with any directive issued by the Director pursuant to this section.

Outreach to Regional Center Consumers Age 65 and Older

Existing public health guidance from the California Department of Public Health states that all people in California who are age 65 or older are eligible for vaccination against COVID-19 because of the risk COVID-19 infection poses to this population. **Please note that eligibility for vaccination does not guarantee actual access to the vaccine due to limited supply.** Therefore, pursuant to W&I Code section 4639.6, to reduce risks associated with COVID-19, regional centers are directed to conduct immediate outreach to, and make contact with, **every regional center consumer age 65 and older who is not known to already be vaccinated**, their family or conservator, or with the administrator of their licensed residential facility.

This outreach and contact should be conducted in-person or by telephone or Internet platform whenever possible, with email, text, other written communication used when those efforts have been unsuccessful. If contact made pursuant to the January 29, 2021 Directive titled "[Contacting Consumers and Planning for COVID-19 Activities](#)," is compliant with the informing and data collection specifications of this Directive, that contact fulfills this requirement.

The regional center shall make every reasonable effort to provide the following information for regional center consumers:

- Information about where to obtain a vaccine.
- Information about how to schedule an appointment to receive a vaccine.
- Information about options for assistance in accessing vaccination, including regional center or vendor assistance, public telephone hotlines or websites, transportation, and similar resources.
- Information about the vaccines and their safety, such as from the Department's Frequently Asked Questions and other resources found here: <https://www.dds.ca.gov/corona-virus-information-and-resources/vaccine-testing/>

The regional center shall make every reasonable effort to obtain the following information for each regional center consumer, if the consumer or conservator agrees or has consented to provide it:

- Information necessary to populate all applicable vaccination fields required in SANDIS, including but not limited to:
 - Date(s) of vaccination
 - Brand of vaccine

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- Any significant adverse reaction, as specified in SANDIS
- Whether the consumer or conservator declines vaccination
- Any request by a consumer for assistance in scheduling and accessing a vaccination, and the type of assistance requested.

In the interest of public health, time is of the essence. Therefore, the regional center may utilize its own employees to make these contacts, and also may utilize the individual's existing service providers to do so, if necessary. A regional center's communication efforts should include notifying consumers and/or families that someone other than their usual service coordinator may be contacting them about vaccinations, if such a decision is made.

Eligible Populations in the Future

The Governor has announced that beginning March 15, 2021, additional people will be eligible for vaccination, including the following persons:

- Individuals ages 16 through 64 who are deemed by the clinical judgment of their health care provider to be at the very highest risk for morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 as a direct result of one or more of the following severe health conditions:
 - **Cancer**, current with debilitated or immunocompromised state
 - **Chronic kidney disease**, stage 4 or above
 - **Chronic pulmonary disease**, oxygen dependent
 - **Down syndrome**
 - **Immunocompromised state** (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
 - **Pregnancy**
 - **Sickle cell disease**
 - **Heart conditions**, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies (excludes hypertension)
 - **Severe obesity** (Body Mass Index ≥ 40 kg/m²)
 - **Type 2 diabetes mellitus** with hemoglobin A1c level greater than 7.5%

OR

If as a result of a developmental or other severe high-risk disability, one or more of the following applies:

- The individual is likely to develop severe life-threatening illness or death from COVID-19 infection
- Acquiring COVID-19 will limit the individual's ability to receive ongoing care or services vital to their well-being and survival
- Providing adequate and timely COVID-19 care will be particularly challenging as a result of the individual's disability

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The information above regarding “Eligible Populations in the Future” is subject to change as additional scientific evidence becomes available. The Department is providing this initial information now to assist regional centers, caregivers, providers, and consumers in their efforts to become vaccinated.

The Department will issue a future Directive for the populations outlined above who will be eligible for vaccine prioritization in the future. This future Directive will contain requirements similar to those described in this Directive and specific to persons age 65 and older. More information will be forthcoming at a later date.

This Directive is effective immediately, and is necessary to protect the health of persons age 65 and older from the risks associated with potential COVID-19 infection.

Consumers, family members or providers should contact their local regional center with any questions regarding this Directive. Questions from regional centers should be directed to DDSC19Directives@dds.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

NANCY BARGMANN
Director

cc: Regional Center Board Presidents
Regional Center Administrators
Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
Regional Center Community Services Directors
Association of Regional Center Agencies