

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

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September 14, 2022

TO: REGIONAL CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: COVID-19 POLICY UPDATES

Yesterday, the State's Public Health Officer [announced](#) several changes to COVID-19 public health orders. All these changes take effect on Saturday, September 17, 2022.

The following public health orders have been repealed, ending the required weekly diagnostic testing of unvaccinated employees in certain congregate settings, dental offices, and schools:

- [7/26/21 Health Care Worker Protections in High-Risk Settings](#)
- [8/11/21 Vaccine Verification for Workers in Schools](#)

Several other public health orders have been amended. They are listed at the end of the announcement linked above. Each public health order also links to its own Questions and Answers document. These amended public health orders similarly end required weekly diagnostic testing of unvaccinated employees in health care, correctional medical facilities, and adult residential and home health settings, except as needed to comply with federal requirements (skilled nursing facilities). **The existing vaccination and booster requirement for workers in these settings has not changed.** Also, the timing of required boosters has been [updated](#) (see Table A at the link) to reflect the latest recommendations from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Facilities must continue to track workers' vaccination or exemption status. Facilities also may consider continuing to offer testing for employees in alignment with CDC's guidance, and should be prepared to ramp up testing at worksites in the event of a future outbreak or future requirement.

Masks continue to be required for all individuals in the indoor settings listed below, regardless of vaccination status. Surgical masks or higher-level respirators (e.g., N95s, KN95s, KF94s) with good fit are highly recommended.

- [Healthcare settings](#)
- [Long-term care settings and adult and senior care facilities](#)
- State and local correctional facilities and detention centers
- Homeless shelters, [emergency shelters](#) and [cooling and heating centers](#)

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Facility types listed above may be subject to requirements issued by either the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) or the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). For this reason, we continue to encourage signing up to directly receive CDPH all-facility letters and CDSS program instruction notices, respectively, by emailing LNCPolicy@cdph.ca.gov and/or visiting <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/community-care-licensing/subscribe>.

Booster Shots

On September 3, 2022, the California Health and Human Services Agency and CDPH issued a [joint statement](#) on the emergency use authorization in the United States of updated COVID-19 boosters – the Moderna bivalent booster for individuals age 18 years and older and the Pfizer-BioNTech bivalent booster for individuals age 12 years and older. This statement follows the [Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup's](#) and the CDC's support of the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' recommendation.

In summary, these new boosters replace the earlier versions of boosters, which no longer are authorized for use. These new bivalent boosters are designed to address both the original and more recent variants of the COVID-19 virus. These booster shots may be used no sooner than two months after a previous primary series or other booster shot. People must receive primary vaccination before receiving one of these new booster shots. The new Moderna booster is available only to individuals age 18 years and older. The new Pfizer-BioNTech booster is available to individuals age 12 years and older. The supply of both new boosters may be limited initially as production increases. Either of the new boosters may be administered at the same time as other vaccines, including the annual influenza (flu) vaccine.

Other Information

September and October annually mark the beginning of flu season. People over the age of six months are encouraged to obtain the annual flu shot, which widely is available. Information about the flu and its prevention and treatment is available from the [CDC](#).

As noted in prior letters, personal protective equipment (PPE) remains available from the Department of Developmental Services. If PPE cannot be obtained through local efforts and resources, then requests from regional centers for PPE in specific quantities may be made to the Emergency Officer, Tamara Rodriguez, at tamara.rodriquez@dds.ca.gov.

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We will continue to keep you updated as additional information becomes available about COVID-19, vaccines, booster shots, and other public health and workplace guidance. California's main COVID-19 website is covid19.ca.gov. It covers a wide range of topics, and can be checked frequently for the latest updates.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by:

PETE CERVINKA
Chief, Data Analytics and Strategy

cc: Regional Center Board Presidents
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Regional Center Directors of Consumer Services
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