IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING COVID-19 VACCINES FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS AND DISABILITIES

**This document was revised on 3/10/2021. The availability of the COVID-19 vaccine is changing daily, for the most up to date vaccine planning and phasing please check [https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/plan.html](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/plan.html)

Reach out to us at Family Voices of Minnesota for the most recent family experiences and resources.

Family Voices of Minnesota has received questions from families who are providing care for their children, youth and young adults with complex health care needs or disabilities about their eligibility to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. **YOU DO QUALIFY FOR THE VACCINE!**

The information below applies to:

- Parents, caregivers and family members who are paid as their child’s Personal Care Attendant (PCA) from Medical Assistance through a Waiver or Consumer Support Grant **AND**
- Parents, caregivers, family members who are **NOT** paid (UNPAID), but still providing care for their family member with complex needs

The Minnesota Department of Health, in a revised Guide to Phase 1a Vaccine Allocation, has offered clarification on who is considered health care personnel and are therefore eligible to receive the COVID-19 Vaccine. This new clarification states: “**Health care workers are those both who are paid and those who are unpaid. This includes personal care assistants (PCAs) and direct support professionals (DSPs), including those working on waivers and those working in home and community-based services. Eligible unpaid caregivers include primary caregivers who work in similar capacities as PCAs, DSPs and nurses for persons with complex medical needs and tactile interpreters for people who are deafblind.**”

It is **possible** that staff providing the vaccine may not be aware of this recent clarification and so we recommend that families:

- Print out and bring this written documentation with you to a vaccine appointment: [https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/phase1aguide.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/phase1aguide.pdf), and highlight the information on Page 5 – Phase 1A: third priority.
- If possible, bring documentation from your child/family member’s doctor stating that you are providing an array of personal supports in close proximity with your family member who has complex needs. Here is a sample letter created by MDH [https://familyvoicesofminnesota.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Sample-Letter-for-Caregivers-3.5.21.docx](https://familyvoicesofminnesota.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Sample-Letter-for-Caregivers-3.5.21.docx)

Also, please note that on 3/9/2021 Governor Walz announced that Phase 1b, Tiers 2 and 3 are now eligible to be vaccinated. The current information about who is covered in these phases can be accessed here: [https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/phase1b1c2.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/phase1b1c2.pdf)
# How to Get an Appointment for a Vaccination

If you have not yet been vaccinated, sign up for the Vaccine Connector using this link: [https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/connector/](https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/connector/). **Note that MDH is in the process of making changes to the connector that will help caregivers identify themselves. Until then families should fill out the connector as indicated below.**

*If you have questions about the Vaccine Connector or need assistance filling it out, call the Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector Hotline at 1-833-431-2053.

## HOW TO FILL OUT THE VACCINE CONNECTOR FORM AS A PARENT OR CAREGIVER

Parents or caregivers of medically complex individuals, paid or unpaid ARE HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL (HCP):

**Demographic Details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you a health care worker, work in a health care facility, first responder who provides direct patient care as part of the EMS system, or are a primary caregiver for someone who has a complex medical condition or disability in Minnesota?</td>
<td>Yes, I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you work in child care or PK12 education in Minnesota?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are employed, can you work from home?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check “Yes, I am”. You are a caregiver.

Check “NO” to document the fact that your work as a care provider CANNOT be done remotely and involves direct contact with the individual needing care. You can also leave this blank.

**Do you work in any of the following industries (check all that apply):**

- Correctional setting
- Energy
- Finance
- First responders (e.g., firefighters, police)
- Food and agricultural worker
- Food retail
- Food service
- Housing/shelter construction
- Information technology/communications
- Legal
- Manufacturing
- Media
- Public safety (engineers)
- Public transit workers
- Transportation and logistics
- U.S. Postal Service
- Water and wastewater
- Other/None

Select “Other/None”.

If you are not paid as a caregiver, type “self-employed” when it asks for your employer’s name. If you are a paid caregiver, list the name of the company that issues your check. Check “Yes, I am”. You are a caregiver.

Type “Home Health”.

Type what best describes your role, for example “direct support”, “unpaid caregiver to individual with medical complexity”, “PCA”, etc..
Complete the all other parts of the form according to your unique situation. You will receive confirmation via email that your Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector sign-up is complete.

Now that you are in the “line” for a vaccine you will receive email updates. When a vaccine is available you will receive an email prompting you to choose an appointment time. Because you are in the current priority phase this should happen sooner than later but wait times vary.

There Are Other Ways to Schedule Vaccine Appointments

You don’t have to stop there. There are multiple places offering the COVID-19 Vaccine. You can look for locations offering the vaccine even after filling out the Vaccine Connector until you are successful. Although supplies of the vaccine are limited, families are accessing the vaccine from:

- Health systems such as M Health Fairview, Allina, and HealthPartners
- Pharmacies such as Walmart, Sam’s Club, Cub Pharmacy, and Thrifty White
- City or county Public Health departments

To search for available vaccines, click on this Minnesota Department of Health website: https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp, scroll down to see the interactive map that looks like the image below. Many people find it helpful to visit that page often to look for an available appointment.
Recommended Documents to Take to Your Appointment

Even before you are scheduled for an appointment you will want to gather documentation. These are the items we recommend you take to your vaccination appointment.

- Your valid state ID or passport

- Your insurance card (if you have insurance) *your insurance will not be billed, the vaccine is free

- **If you receive pay for your caregiving role:** Proof of Employment *this could be a letter from the FMS stating that you are a paid caregiver or a recent paystub

- **If you do not receive pay for your caregiving role:** A letter from your family member’s physician which states that:
  - You (your name as shown on your id) are a home health caregiver providing care for an individual who is considered at risk for serious complications from COVID-19 and
  - That the necessary care provided requires close contact with the individual/child due to the nature of the job.

You **may not** be required to present any of this documentation, but it is advisable to have it in case you are asked.