



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **PFIZER COVID VACCINE BOOSTER AUTHORIZATION ENDORSED BY CDC**

**Shot recommended only for certain immune-compromised populations and those in high-risk settings**

CUMBERLAND, MD – On Thursday, CDC Director Rochelle P. Walensky, M.D., M.P.H., endorsed the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recommendation for a booster shot of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in certain populations and also recommended a booster dose for those in high risk occupational and institutional settings. The endorsement follows the FDA's authorization of the Pfizer booster on Wednesday.

The CDC is only recommending boosters for the following groups only at this time.

- people 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings should receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series,
- people aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions should receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series,
- people aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions may receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks, and
- people aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting may receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks.

"I believe we can best serve the nation's public health needs by providing booster doses for the elderly, those in long-term care facilities, people with underlying medical conditions, and for adults at high risk of disease from occupational and institutional exposures to COVID-19. This aligns with the FDA's booster authorization and makes these groups eligible for a booster shot," said Dr. Walensky.

Only those who were initially vaccinated with the Pfizer COVID vaccine can get the authorized booster. Those who were vaccinated with Moderna or Johnson & Johnson cannot get the Pfizer booster shot.

"Today, ACIP only reviewed data for the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. We will address, with the same sense of urgency, recommendations for the Moderna and J&J vaccines as soon as those data are available," Walensky said.

Allegheny County's COVID-19 case rate has remained the highest in Maryland for eight consecutive days, with Garrett and Washington Counties also among the jurisdictions with the highest COVID case rates in the state. Health officials cite vaccination refusal as a key factor driving the high rate of infection in western Maryland.

"If anyone doubts that vaccination rates directly impact and improve infection rates for COVID-19, just look at the numbers. Jurisdictions that are experiencing lower case rates are those with a larger portion of their population fully vaccinated," states Allegheny County Health Department Public Information Coordinator Brenda Caldwell.

Maryland county-level data for vaccinations and COVID cases is updated by the Maryland Department of Health daily by 11 a.m. and can be found at [coronavirus.maryland.gov](https://coronavirus.maryland.gov).

Free COVID-19 vaccines are readily available at local pharmacies, urgent care clinics, pediatric offices, and some primary care providers.

***[more]***

The Allegany County Health Department will hold its next COVID-19 vaccination clinic on Wednesday, September 29 at 12501 Willowbrook Road, Cumberland. Vaccinations are free and no appointment is needed. From 9 a.m. to 12 noon, both Moderna and Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccines are offered. From 1 to 5:30 p.m., the Pfizer vaccine is offered for those age 12 and older. Anyone under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

As of September 23, 44.3% of Allegany County residents were fully vaccinated against COVID-19, compared to 63.9% of all Marylanders.

Drive-thru testing is offered three days per week at the Allegany County Fairgrounds, 11400 Moss Avenue, Cumberland, MD. Testing clinics are held Mondays from 2 to 7 p.m., and Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. No appointment is needed, but pre-registration is strongly encouraged to minimize wait times at the clinic. You can pre-register for testing by going to [health.maryland.gov/allegany](http://health.maryland.gov/allegany) and clicking on the pre-registration link under “COVID-19 Information” on the right side of the page.

**Allegany County COVID-19 Case Statistics as of September 23:**

- New COVID Cases: 100 (cumulative total 8,734)
- Additional Deaths: 1 (cumulative total 230)
- Cases Per 100,000 Population: 71.41 (*Maryland: 19.7*)
- Positivity Rate: 11.85% (*Maryland: 4.28%*)

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