

Dear Colleague,

This week, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 12-15. This follows an expanded emergency use authorization issued by the Food and Drug Administration earlier this week.

Parents can now begin to schedule their children ages 12 and up through any vaccine provider administering Pfizer. You can find a vaccine provider administering Pfizer near you at www.vaccines.gov.

The authorization follows a Phase 3 clinical trial with 2,260 participants. Data from this trial showed that the vaccine was 100 percent effective in preventing cases of COVID-19, and the immune response was just as strong, and potentially stronger, when compared to clinical trial participants aged 16 through 25 years considered in the vaccine's initial authorization. Side effects experienced by some participants in the clinical trial were similar to what was experienced by older teenagers and adults – tiredness, headaches, muscle pain, and fever. As with all other vaccines, Pfizer, the FDA, and the CDC will continue to monitor for safety moving forward.

While children and adolescents are not as likely to experience severe effects from COVID-19 as older adults, they are still able to transmit the virus if they contract it. Vaccine uptake in children and teenagers and protecting them from catching and further spreading the virus can help reduce community transmission and protect more vulnerable people. There is also still great risk and uncertainty surrounding this virus and its long-term effects, and this vaccine is a way to help keep more people safe from COVID-19. More information about the Pfizer vaccine's extended emergency authorization is available from the [FDA](#) and through a fact sheet for [recipients and caregivers](#).

We understand that there may be questions as children and their caregivers consider their options regarding these vaccines. We hope that families and caregivers will continue to trust the rigorous testing and scrutiny these vaccines undergo before emergency authorization and choose this option to protect their children from COVID-19.

Thank you,

Office of the Deputy Secretary for Children, Youth and Families
Pennsylvania Department of Human Services
625 Forster Street | Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120
www.dhs.pa.gov | www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov

If you suspect child abuse or neglect, please call ChildLine to make a confidential report at 1-800-932-0313