Older Adults Can Now Receive an Additional Dose of Updated COVID-19 Vaccine
February 29, 2024

Summary and Action Items

- The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that persons ≥ 65 years of age should receive an additional dose of the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine.

- The additional dose is to be administered at least 4 months following the initial dose of the updated 2023–2024 COVID-19 vaccine, which was initially released in Fall of 2023.

- This recommendation is based on evidence that older adults are at increased risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death if they get COVID-19, therefore additional protection is warranted.

BACKGROUND

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Mandy Cohen endorsed the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices’ (ACIP) recommendation for adults ages 65 years and older to receive an additional updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine dose. The recommendation acknowledges the increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19 in older adults.

The CDC details that data continues to show the importance of vaccination to protect those most at risk for severe outcomes of COVID-19. An additional dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine may restore protection that has waned since a fall vaccine dose, providing increased protection to adults ages 65 years and older. Adults 65 years and older are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, with more than half of COVID-19 hospitalizations in the USA during October 2023 to December 2023 occurring in this age group. Local epidemiology of COVID-19 in Chicago is consistent with national trends, demonstrating high risk of severe COVID-19 disease in older Chicagoans.

The percent of Chicago seniors who are up to date with an initial dose of the 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine is low at 31.8% among those 65-74 years of age and 36.0% among those 75 years of age and older. Disparities in coverage by race-ethnicity continue to persist (Figure 1). Healthcare providers should use all opportunities to recommend vaccination to their patients who have not received the updated COVID-19 vaccine this season.

Figure 1. Disparities in the percent of Chicago seniors who are up to date with the 2023-24 COVID-19 Vaccine