June 2, 2021

The MMS will continue to monitor developments related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the response by state and federal agencies. For current information, including updates from NEJM, visit the dedicated page on the MMS website: massmed.org/covid-19.

Public Health

DPH updates on vaccine inventory requirements, Pfizer storage, guidance for viewing patient vaccination records reported to MIIS

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is alerting internal medicine, family practice, pediatric, and multi-specialty and community health centers providing COVID-19 vaccine that they must now use COVID-19 vaccines within four weeks of receipt and must deplete existing inventory before an additional order is approved. Previously, all vaccine needed to be administered within 10 days of receipt. This requirement was updated in response to Massachusetts Medical Society advocacy for increased flexibility and an increased understanding of logistical issues, as well as increased vaccine availability.

Read more about the updated ordering process and Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Program (MCVP) requirements, recent changes to Pfizer vaccine storage, and guidance for viewing patient vaccination records in the Massachusetts Immunization Information
Mass. DPH requests physicians’ help in educating patients about the COVID-19 vaccine

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is asking physicians to reach out to their unvaccinated patients and make a strong recommendation for COVID-19 vaccination. Key suggested messaging includes helping patients understand that all three COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective, they all prevent severe illness, hospitalization and death, the vaccine is free, and no ID is needed. Patient education resources as well as instructions for enrolling in the Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccination Program (MCVP) for physicians interested in administering vaccine in their practice, can be accessed here.

Practice Management

Myocarditis and pericarditis after receipt of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines among adolescents and young adults

Since April 2021, increased cases of myocarditis and pericarditis have been reported in the United States after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna), particularly in adolescents and young adults. There has not been a similar reporting pattern observed after receipt of the Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine (Johnson & Johnson).

In most cases, patients who presented for medical care have responded well to medications and rest and had prompt improvement of symptoms. Reported cases have occurred predominantly in male adolescents and young adults 16 years of age and older. Onset was typically within several days after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination, and cases have occurred more often after the second dose than the first dose. CDC and its partners are investigating these reports of myocarditis and pericarditis following mRNA COVID-19 vaccination. Click here to learn more.
FDA authorizes additional monoclonal antibody for treatment of COVID-19

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an emergency use authorization (EUA) for the investigational monoclonal antibody therapy sotrovimab for the treatment of mild-to-moderate COVID-19 in adults and pediatric patients (12 years of age and older weighing at least 40 kilograms [about 88 pounds]) with positive results of direct SARS-CoV-2 viral testing and who are at high risk for progression to severe COVID-19, including hospitalization or death. This includes, for example, individuals who are 65 years of age and older or individuals who have certain medical conditions.

The safety and effectiveness of this investigational therapy continues to be evaluated for treatment of COVID-19. Sotrovimab is not authorized for patients who are hospitalized due to COVID-19 or require oxygen therapy due to COVID-19. This treatment has not shown benefit in patients hospitalized due to COVID-19 and monoclonal antibodies may be associated with worse clinical outcomes when administered to hospitalized patients requiring high flow oxygen or mechanical ventilation.

For more information click here.