



Temporary Guidance for COVID-19 Immunization of Patients Under Age 65 with Significant High-Risk Medical Conditions

This guidance shall remain in place until March 15, 2021, when high-risk people age 16-64 become eligible under the [CDPH February 12, 2021 Provider Bulletin](#).

Background

Due to limited supply, COVID-19 vaccination has been prioritized based on risk of exposure and risk of morbidity and mortality. However, questions have come up about patients with unique medical conditions that may pose very high risks for morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 infection AND who may not be able to minimize their risks for COVID-19 exposure.

Of note, the California Department of Health vaccine prioritization committees are aware of the following high-risk conditions for complications of COVID-19 infection. All these conditions are considered in the current prioritization schemes and thus presence of one of these conditions alone would not be a reason to immunize someone outside of a currently eligible priority group. For example, if currently patients >65 with comorbid conditions listed below ARE eligible for vaccination, and <65 are not, one should not use the presence of just one of these conditions to be the reason for vaccination for someone <65 years old unless other conditions are present.

Under current CDPH prioritization guidelines, people with the following single comorbid conditions alone are currently NOT eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccination*:

Adults of any age with the following conditions **are at increased risk** of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19:

- Cancer, current diagnosis (not history of)
- Chronic kidney disease of any stage
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) including emphysema and chronic bronchitis
- Down Syndrome
- Heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies and pulmonary hypertension
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant blood or bone marrow transplant, HIV with a low CD4 count, current use of oral corticosteroids, or other immune weakening medicine
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 kg/m² or higher)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease and thalassemia
- Current or former smoker
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>



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However, patients may have presentations that indicate they would be at significantly higher risk than current prioritized groups, and whose clinical situation is not addressed above. For example, COPD on continuous oxygen is a smaller subset and higher risk group than the larger “COPD” category above.

If you have a patient:

1. Whose medical condition is either not included in the above list (i.e. s/p solid organ transplant) or who has an extremely severe form of a condition above (i.e. COPD on continuous oxygen therapy) who you believe would be at very high risk of morbidity and mortality from COVID-19 infection,
AND
2. Has living conditions that make isolation challenging (i.e. household members who work outside the home), they may qualify under our temporary guidance for Madera County for COVID-19 Vaccination.

If a provider feels a patient should be immunized outside of the current prioritization guidance from the California Department of Public Health, cases can be reviewed and approved in two ways.

Hospital or Clinic Group Review Committees

The hospital or clinic group should establish a committee of 2 or more members to review cases being considered for vaccination outside of currently eligible patient groups using the criteria above. A provider who believes they have a high-risk patient for whom vaccination is indicated, can submit a case summary to this group. On a weekly basis, Hospital or Clinic Group Review Committees must report to the Madera County Department of Public Health to a de-identified list by diagnosis of patients approved for vaccination outside of the current eligibility criteria by either:

- Fax to (559) 674-7262
- Secure email to VaccineReferral@maderacounty.com

Public Health Review Committee

Review Committee led by Public Health Officer Simon Paul, MD, will review the case, and if they agree with the need for immunization, will sign off that “in their opinion this patient is at significantly higher risk of morbidity and death from COVID than our current vaccine eligible patients, AND due to household, work, or health care needs, this person cannot effectively minimize their COVID exposure risk.” Physicians are invited to refer patients using the Request for *Evaluation of High-risk Patients to be Considered for COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility* form. On a weekly basis, the Review Committee will inform requesting physicians of decisions.