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**Guidance Summary for COVID-19 Vaccination Access for Staff in Outpatient and Community-based Programs Certified or Otherwise Authorized by the New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports (OASAS):**

This guidance is based on the 1/4/21 guidance document issued by the New York State (NYS) Department of Health (DOH) for OPWDD, OMH, and OASAS titled, “Guidance for the NYS Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Office of Mental Health (OMH), and Office of Addiction Services and Support (OASAS): Prioritization of Essential Healthcare and Direct Support Personnel as well as High Risk Populations for COVID-19 Vaccination.”

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/12/weekly-guidance-overlay-template-weeks-3-and-4-12.28.20.pdf>

Scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations for priority populations, including front-line staff providing direct in-person care or support services or other staff in a position where they have direct contact with service recipients, in OASAS outpatient and community-based programs, will begin starting January 4, 2021. The above guidance is primarily for programs outside of New York City (NYC), and additional guidance for NYC-based programs will be forthcoming from the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH).

As vaccine supply currently remains limited, OASAS providers must prioritize scheduling vaccination for staff in their outpatient and community-based programs who meet the below descriptions. Providers must not schedule any other staff for vaccination until receiving direction in the form of updated guidance. The groups prioritized for vaccination within OASAS outpatient and community-based programs include:

1. **Staff** who work, intern, or volunteer in outpatient programs and community-based services, certified or otherwise authorized by OASAS, with direct, regular in-person contact with patients and/or service recipients necessary to performing their jobs. Per previous OASAS [Guidance for Outpatient Addiction Programs](#) and [Updated Preliminary: Guidance to OASAS Certified Programs about Addiction Treatment, Recovery, and Prevention Services during New York Forward](#), most OASAS outpatient and community-based providers can and should be providing as many services via telepractice as possible, and should continue to do so. Staff who can perform and have been performing their jobs remotely and staff without direct, in-person contact with service recipients should not receive vaccination at this time. Examples of staff who may have direct, in-person contact with service recipients include but are not limited to the following: receptionists in outpatient settings; clinical staff in opioid treatment programs (OTPs), Centers of Treatment Innovation (COTIs), and Open Access Centers; staff providing in-person crisis services in non-OTP outpatient programs; staff who provide transportation in unlicensed support services; staff in Recovery Centers and Youth Clubhouses who provide regular, in-person recovery support services; and staff of Prevention Providers who provide in-person services regularly in schools or other settings. These examples are not an exhaustive list of eligible staff/settings. Provision of COVID-19 vaccination to staff who do not have direct in-person contact and/or have been operating through telepractice will come at a later date as per NYS DOH and NYC DOHMH guidance and will require OASAS authorization.
2. **Examples of OASAS outpatient and community-based programs where the above prioritized staff may work: OASAS certified programs** including Outpatient (including Intensive Outpatient, CCBHCs, and Integrated Sites, COTIs, Open Access Centers), Outpatient Rehabilitation, Mobile Treatment, and OTPs; **OASAS uncertified**

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**programs** including Prevention Providers (providing in-person prevention counseling), Recovery Centers (providing in-person peer support/engagement/counseling), Youth Clubhouses (providing in-person youth support/engagement/counseling), Mobile Outreach (providing engagement and transport of patients to treatment, to courts, to recovery centers, etc.), Family Support Navigators (providing in-person services in OASAS settings and community settings).

Patients of outpatient treatment programs and service recipients of non-treatment community-based services and supports are not eligible for vaccination at this time. OASAS awaits further guidance from the NYS DOH regarding the prioritization of patients and service recipients of OASAS outpatient and community-based programs.

The NYS DOH appointment scheduler is designed to make batch appointments, to the extent programs can transport safely multiple individuals to a vaccination site. Please find current links to schedule appointments at designated [COVID-19 vaccination sites](#). This may be helpful for some outpatient and community-based providers. Programs may also be able to coordinate with vaccinators to bring vaccine to their programs to administer rather than having staff be transported or transport themselves to vaccination sites. Some treatment programs may opt to become vaccination sites, see the NYS DOH website (<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-information-providers>) for details. The NYC DOHMH will be communicating about an NYC-specific vaccination scheduling process for outpatient and community-based programs. Please also note that NYC-based treatment providers who wish to become vaccination sites must complete a separate, NYC-based enrollment process.

**Vaccine Fact Sheets:** As of 1/5/21, there are two vaccines with EUAs from the FDA, and fact sheets from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/eua/index.html>.

**Information on the screening process:** The NYS DOH has a current COVID-19 vaccine screening tool available on its website. There is also a document on the website that explains the screening and the logic regarding its questions: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-vaccine-information-providers>.

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