

# COVID-19: Best Practices for Patient Communication

## Staff and providers must support vaccination to build trust and confidence.

- Find and keep a pulse on all staff members' thoughts and feelings about the vaccine.
- Select a practice champion or team for COVID-19 vaccinations. This person(s) does not have to be a provider/clinician. The champion(s) will positively influence vaccination decisions of peers and patients.
- Educate the practice champion(s) on the different COVID-19 vaccines. They should know how many doses are given, the time between doses and efficacy depending on which vaccine is being discussed.
- Encourage staff to proactively explain possible side effects and reactions to the vaccine. This will help alleviate confusion and calm patient anxiety.
- Make COVID-19 vaccine resources available for reference and to provide as handouts for patients or staff members who would like more information. Compile materials in multiple languages to the extent possible.
- Provide education for staff conducting patient outreach so that they are able to lead empathetic vaccine conversations, address myths and common questions patients might have and use motivational interviewing techniques when necessary.
- Ensure that all staff can explain that the vaccine is safe to patients.
- Explain that there is no cost to the patient for the vaccine, but that the practice will bill insurance if applicable.
- Utilize multilingual staff or provide access to interpreters.



## Create an outreach plan.

- Identify patients that need vaccination. Prioritize by higher need populations. Those patients include those who are elderly, have chronic health conditions, have socioeconomic vulnerabilities, etc.
  - The Vaccine Tracking Service in CRISP can help you identify patients to target as it displays those who have not yet received the vaccine along with their conditions.
- Have talking points and a script prepared.
- Determine the contact method: phone call and/or patient portal.
- Initiate a social media campaign.

## Create an outreach plan.

- Document:
  - Were you able to reach the patient?
  - Have they already been vaccinated?
  - Have they made an appointment to get vaccinated?
  - Did you help them make an appointment?
  - Did they decline to get vaccinated? Why?
  - Measure your outreach effort's impact regularly and update/revise your strategy as needed.
    - What is working to get our patients vaccinated?
    - What messaging or information has resonated best with patients?
- Outreach notes can be saved and shared in the Vaccine Tracking Service in CRISP for reference.
- Follow-up



## Make it as easy as possible for patients.

- Offer vaccine clinics if you can get a supply in-house. Hold clinics during evening and weekend hours.
- Hold vaccine hours with dedicated staff for periods of time through the day. Allow for walk-ins and scheduled vaccine appointments.
- Compile a list of vaccination site locations (e.g., pop-up sites, mass vaccination clinics, community venues, religious centers, community centers, mobile clinics, etc.). Train staff to assist patients with scheduling vaccine appointments at another location. Do this while you are on the phone with the patient or have them in front of you. **Do not wait!**
- Compile a list of pharmacies in the area that offer the vaccine. Indicate location, hours of operation and if they take walk-ins.
- Find information on local mobile vaccine clinics. Have this available to share with patients.