

Gov. Pritzker Outlines Robust Preparations for Anticipated Approval of COVID-19 Vaccine for Children Ages 5-11

October 25 2021 2:33 PM



More than 2,200 Locations Already Signed up to Provide Pediatric Vaccinations to 1.1 Million Soon to be Eligible Illinois Children

CHICAGO – With nearly 6.2 million children nationwide testing positive for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic, Governor JB Pritzker today outlined the coordinated statewide efforts to prepare for the anticipated approval of the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5-11. Joined by Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike and other pediatric healthcare professionals, the governor announced the administration is partnering with pediatricians, local health departments, schools, and other organizations ahead of the expected emergency-use authorization from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Federal Drug Administration (FDA).

Once the Pfizer vaccine is authorized for use in children ages 5-11, more than 2,200 locations and providers statewide, including Chicago, are already enrolled to provide the vaccine. Illinois is expected to receive an initial allotment of approximately 306,000 doses for the state's youngest residents, with an additional 73,000 doses for the City of Chicago, and well over 100,000 additional doses headed to the federal government's pharmacy partners in Illinois. Overall, the initial allocation will amount to approximately 500,000 doses available to children in Illinois.

“Thanks to scientists and doctors who’ve worked tirelessly for the last year, we are likely just days away from having the COVID-19 vaccine available for 1.1 million more Illinois children, ages 5 to 11,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “As soon as the FDA and the CDC have signed off, these kid-sized doses and kid-sized needles will be shipped out to pharmacies, pediatricians and other providers across Illinois — and IDPH has reached out to every pediatrician in the state to enroll them in the vaccine distribution program. As a parent, you should call your pediatrician now to make sure they’ve enrolled and have ordered doses. And I will do everything in my power to continue to follow the science and keep our kids safe.”

As vaccination rates among adults increasing, positive COVID-19 cases among children have spiked. For the week ending October 14, one in four cases nationally were children, according to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#).

In preparation for administering shots to the 1.1 million children across the state who will become eligible for the vaccine in the coming days, IDPH is enrolling pediatric offices to provide COVID-19 shots. There are more than 2,200 locations and providers statewide, including Chicago, that have already enrolled to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to the 5-11 age bracket. That includes more than 700 pediatric and family

medicine practices, more than 700 pharmacy locations, approximately 100 urgent care locations, 112 local health departments and public health clinics, 270 federally qualified health centers, more than 200 hospitals, and dozens of rural health clinics.

“Now that authorization has been granted, it is critically important that we get as many children vaccinated as quickly as possible, in order to provide them with the ultimate degree of protection,” **said Dr. Ngozi Ezike, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health.** “IDPH is partnering with practices of all sizes, healthcare systems, and physician associations across the state to ensure the vaccine is readily available as soon as parents and guardians request it for their children.”

To make access to the pediatric vaccine as equitable as possible, the administration is also coordinating with federally qualified health centers, local health departments, and family practitioners.

IDPH is also overseeing outreach to 756 elementary school districts across the state to offer parent-approved vaccination clinics on school grounds, just as was offered to all relevant school districts when the COVID-19 vaccines were made available to 12-17-year-old students. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA)-IDPH mobile vaccination teams have already conducted over 4,000 events statewide, including more than 870 school and youth events for older (12-17) students. An additional 350 vaccine clinics among older students have been planned for the coming weeks.

Illinois remains a national leader in youth vaccination, with more than two-thirds of the state’s 12-17 population receiving at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), Illinois is currently the only state in the Midwest to hit this milestone.

“The best way to protect our children is by ensuring that we vaccinate as many youngsters as possible,” **said Jihad Shoshara, MD, FAAP.** “We know that vaccines are the most powerful resource we have in the fight against COVID-19, and with their authorization for ages 5 – 11, and by collaborating with health care systems across the state, we have the ability help families protect their children.”

“As the professional association of Illinois pediatricians, the Illinois Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics stands ready to partner in protecting our young patients by utilizing every tool at our disposal,” **said Michelle Barnes, MD, FAAP a member of the ICAAP Executive Board.** “Our members are committed to working with IDPH and local health departments, to administer vaccine and further protect our children from this virus.”

The Pfizer vaccine consists of two doses given three weeks apart followed by a two week wait for maximum immunity. To further ensure the health and safety of Illinois children, the State is requiring current, mandatory trainings for all vaccine providers on the pediatric vaccination guidelines.

This is the latest efforts building upon the Pritzker Administration's existing vaccination or regular testing requirements. This includes all licensed daycare center staff, Pre-K-12 teachers and staff, all higher education personnel, all higher education students, and healthcare workers in a variety of settings, such as hospitals, nursing homes, urgent care facilities, and physician offices. A masking requirement for all Pre-K-12 schools and childcare facilities, including indoor P-12 recreation, has been in effect in Illinois since August 4, 2021. To slow the spread of the highly transmissible COVID-19 Delta variant, all Illinois residents over the age of two have been required to wear a mask in all indoor settings since August 30, 2021, regardless of vaccination status.

To find a vaccine location near you, visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).