South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs

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SITUATION REPORT NO. 51, DATE: OCTOBER 14, 2021
EVENT: COVID-19 PANDEMIC

I.   PFIZER/COMIRNATY BOOSTER SHOTS APPROVED FOR CERTAIN GROUPS

On September 24, 2021 the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) issued guidance following the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approval of Pfizer/Comirnaty booster shot for certain populations, those 65 and older, 18 and older living in Long Term Care (LTC) settings, those aged 50-64 with underlying medical conditions, and frontline health care workers aged 18-64. These are the only populations approved for the booster shots. The CDC guidance can be found here. This guidance is different from the guidance on third shots for immunocompromised individuals, which can be found here.

The boosters are for Pfizer/Comirnaty recipients only. The FDA is expected to review the Moderna application for booster shots in the next two days. Information about that timeline can be found in this article.

More information on COVID-19 Boosters can be found in this NIH Director's Blog article.

II. HHS ANNOUNCES PHASE FOUR OF THE PROVIDER RELIEF FUND PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), is making $25.5 billion in new funding available for health care providers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The application period opens on September 29, 2021 and closes on October 26, 2021. A memo from DDSN on this program can be found here. A release on the program from the US Health & Human Services (HHS) web site can be found here.

III. FLU VACCINES ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR 2021-2022 FLU SEASON

Flu vaccines are now available for the 2021-22 flu season. CDC points out that flu vaccines can be administered at the same time COVID-19 vaccines are given. Full information on flu vaccines and flu season can be found in the Flu Season FAQ from the CDC.

IV. WHO ISSUES BRIEF ON COVID-19 IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

A September 29 brief by the World Health Organization (WHO) states that SARS-COV-2 infections are less severe in children and adolescents and cause fewer deaths. The concern then becomes that these outcomes may lead to less testing of children and more community spread. The brief can be found here.

V.   **APIC PALMETTO HOSTS ITS FALL INFECTION CONTROL CONFERENCE**

The Palmetto Chapter of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology is hosting its Fall Education Conference in a virtual format. The conference will be held from October 27-29 and cost $150 to attend. Continuing education credits for nurses and other health care professionals are available. The conference will feature a diverse group of leaders in the infection control field and will provide networking opportunities for your infection prevention personnel.

Information on registration can be found here.

VI.   **NIH PILOTING AT HOME RAPID COVID-19 DETECTION KITS**

This week, the National Institute of Health (NIH) Director's Blog highlighted an exciting new initiative to keep children safe. As children are back in school and more susceptible to spread with the Delta Variant, work is being done to adapt rapid testing to be used by parents at home. The Say Yes! COVID-19 test is being piloted in a number of states. Promising results are indicating that the tests may be launched nationally soon. See the Director's Blog here.

VII.   **CDC SURVEY ON VACCINE ACCESS IN LTC FACILITIES**

The CDC is conducting a survey to determine if additional support is needed to make vaccines accessible to long term care facilities. More information about access to COVID-19 vaccines by long term care providers can be found here. Guidance with connecting long term care facilities with Federal Pharmacy Partners can be found here. A link to the survey which must be completed by October 15, can be found here.