

November 6, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

Respiratory virus season has started, and **we are requesting your partnership in promoting, encouraging, and facilitating vaccination of your communities, patient populations, and staff.** High vaccination rates help prevent severe infection and are critical to minimizing the impact of respiratory viruses on the healthcare system.

As you know, this year there are several vaccines to protect against respiratory viruses:

1. [COVID-19](#) – Receiving the 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccines provides the best protection against severe disease and death. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older receive a 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine and emphasize the importance of vaccination for those at highest risk including those 65 years and older, children 6 months - 2 years, and people of any age with underlying medical conditions that make them higher risk for severe COVID. For more details please visit: [COVID-19 vaccine recommendations](#)¹
2. [Influenza \(flu\)](#) DPH recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older.
3. [RSV](#) – DPH recommends that healthcare providers should discuss RSV vaccination with for patients who are 50 years or older. For protection of infants, DPH recommends that infants, young children and certain pregnant people are immunized.

Many patients treated in hospitals are generally at increased risk for severe disease, hospitalization and death due to respiratory disease. This includes those who are 65 and older and those who are immunocompromised or have multiple underlying medical conditions. It is especially important that hospital staff and patients are up-to-date with all recommended vaccinations.

As a reminder, DPH facility licensure regulations require hospitals and licensed health care facilities to ensure all healthcare personnel receive their annual flu vaccine and the 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine that became available this fall. Consistent with prior years, DPH continues to expect that hospitals will provide vaccinations to any admitted patient who has not received a seasonal flu vaccine or 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine. In support of facility licensure requirements and DPH guidance and to increase vaccination rates more broadly, we ask that your hospitals and licensed health care facilities take steps to promote vaccine uptake within your systems, including:

1. offering on-site vaccination for staff and patients for flu *and* COVID-19;
2. providing RSV immunization with RSV monoclonal antibodies to newborns prior to discharge alongside hepatitis B vaccine;
3. incorporating RSV vaccination for pregnant people and in patients who are 50 years and older, as clinically appropriate; and
4. promoting the importance of vaccination via signage, newsletters and/or your patient portal.

¹ Full link: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-2025-2026-respiratory-illness-season-covid-19-vaccine-recommendations/download>



If on-site vaccination is not offered, hospitals and licensed health care facilities should provide information and resources to connect patients and staff to vaccination sites. Local pharmacy availability can be found on [Vaccinefinder.org](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dph-recommended-guidance-for-vaccines) and healthcare facilities should confirm with local boards of health the location and timing of any community-based clinics being offered.

For more information about getting vaccinated and staying up-to-date, please refer to [DPH's guidance on vaccination](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dph-recommended-guidance-for-vaccines)² for [COVID-19](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-information)³, [flu](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/flu-prevention-and-vaccine-information)⁴, and [RSV](http://www.mass.gov/rsv)⁵. For the most recent Massachusetts respiratory illness data, visit the [Viral Respiratory Illness Dashboard](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/viral-respiratory-illness-reporting)⁶.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the health and well-being of your patients, staff, and our communities.

Sincerely,

Robbie Goldstein, MD, PhD
Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Steve Walsh,
President & CEO, Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association

Olivia C. Liao, MD, FACS
President, Massachusetts Medical Society

² Full link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dph-recommended-guidance-for-vaccines>

³ Full link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-information>

⁴ Full link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/flu-prevention-and-vaccine-information>

⁵ Full link: <http://www.mass.gov/rsv>

⁶ Full link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/viral-respiratory-illness-reporting>