Employer Best Practices for Addressing COVID-19 Vaccination

It is not vaccines, but the act of vaccinating, that saves lives. Safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19 have been developed, but if the vaccines are not given it will not matter how much time, effort, and money went into developing them. It is important to instill confidence and provide clear and evidence-based information on COVID-19 vaccines to empower your staff to make informed and educated decisions regarding vaccination.

Tips on how to encourage vaccine uptake at your organization

It is critical that organizational leaders play an active role in promoting and/or providing COVID-19 vaccine to their staff and employees.

Leadership should encourage staff to get vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Leaders should pledge to get vaccinated if they haven't already.
- Leadership should send a company-wide email or memo encouraging vaccination.
- Lead with empathy, listen openly to concerns, and be respectful and non-judgmental when addressing staff and employees' questions regarding COVID-19 vaccination.

Encourage staff to learn more about COVID-19 vaccination.
- Send educational materials to your employees for them to review.
  - A video, "COVID-19 Vaccines: What Essential Workers Need to Know" is available on the NDDoH website here.
  - The NDDoH has a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document that answers many of the common concerns/questions that people have about COVID-19 vaccine it can be accessed here.
  - The NDDoH Workplace FAQ provides answers for both employers and employees regrading COVID-19 vaccine. It can be accessed here.
  - It is important to provide multilingual resources for employees who speak languages other than English. For translated COVID-19 vaccine resources click here.
- Consider hosting an educational session at your workplace.

Consider hosting a vaccination clinic at your workplace.
- Contact your local health department, pharmacy or whoever provides influenza vaccination to your employees for information.
- Promote and offer the vaccination during work hours.
- File out the NDDoH COVID-19 Vaccine Workplace Information Survey

If hosting a vaccination clinic at your workplace is not possible, consider other steps to encourage vaccination, such as:

Be flexible in your human resources policies.
- Establish policies that allow employees to take paid leave to seek COVID-19 vaccination in the community.
- Support transportation to off-site vaccination clinics.
- Provide incentives (e.g. reduced testing, bonus or paid leave to employees who complete vaccine series).

Use promotional posters/flyers to advertise locations offering COVID-19 vaccination in the community.
- Display posters about COVID-19 vaccination in break rooms, cafeterias, and other high-traffic areas. The CDC and NDDoH have a variety of posters available, they can be found at:
  - COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit | NDDoH
  - COVID-19 Vaccine Posters/Flyers | CDC

Post resources in company communications.
- Publish articles (e.g. newsletters, intranet, emails, portals) about the importance of COVID-19 vaccination and where to get the vaccine in the community.
  - COVID-19 Vaccine Introductory Letter | NDDoH
  - COVID-19 Vaccine Newsletter Content | NDDoH

Emphasize the benefits of vaccinating against COVID-19

Leadership within your organization should provide strong and clear guidance regarding COVID-19 vaccination. Further, it is important that everyone is able to make an informed decision about vaccination. This includes weighing the benefits of vaccination and the risks associated with not vaccinating and getting COVID-19:

Getting vaccinated will save lives.
- Your staff are on the frontline and at risk of exposure to COVID-19. By promoting vaccination at your facility, employees who vaccinate not only protect themselves from getting sick but may also protect their family, friends, customers, and their fellow co-workers from the virus.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective.

- As of March 19th, 2021, over 115 million COVID-19 vaccine doses have been administered in the U.S. under the most intense safety monitoring in our country's history.
- Side effects from COVID-19 vaccination are typically mild and resolve on their own in 1-2 days.
  - The most common side effects are pain at the site of injection, feeling tired, headache, body aches, chills, and fever.
- Severe allergic reactions to vaccination are rare and manageable with treatment.

The risks of COVID-19 infection are real.

- 1 in 525 North Dakotans have died from COVID-19.
- 1 in 200 North Dakotans have been hospitalized from COVID-19.
- 1 in 8 North Dakotans have tested positve for COVID-19.

Those who have been vaccinated are no longer required to quarantine following exposure if they:

- Are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine) **AND**
- Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.

Distribute COVID-19 vaccine resources to your staff and employees

The CDC, NDDoH and Health Action Alliance have developed a number of COVID-19 vaccine resources that can be used to promote vaccine at your facility. These toolkits/resources will help your organization educate employees about COVID-19 vaccines, raise awareness about the benefits of vaccination, and address common questions and concerns. These toolkits/resources can be accessed at:

- COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Employers | NDDoH
- Essential Workers COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit | CDC
- COVID-19 Vaccine Resources for the Business Community | Health Action Alliance

Additional useful resources on COVID-19 vaccine include:

- ND Commerce COVID-19 Business and Employer Resources
- Immunization Guidance for the Public | NDDoH
- COVID-19 Vaccine & Pregnancy Handout | NDDoH
- COVID-19 Vaccines & Fetal Cell Lines Handout | NDDoH
- What is considered an underlying medical condition for severe COVID-19? | NDDoH

Have additional questions on COVID-19 vaccine? Contact the NDDoH at: covidvaccine@nd.gov