

A Message to Healthcare Providers: Washington State Secretary of Health Umair Shah Seeks Your Help

Greetings Washington State Healthcare Providers,

In follow-up to Governor Jay Inslee and the Washington State Department of Health convening healthcare partners, health insurance plans, and dental providers from across Washington this past week, I would like to thank you for your continued work throughout this COVID-19 pandemic and most recently, in supporting our statewide goal of vaccinating as many Washingtonians as quickly and as equitably as possible.

As you know, we are making incredible progress in our state COVID-19 vaccination efforts. To date, 20 percent of Washingtonians are fully vaccinated, and we have administered more than 4 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine across the state. This success is in no small part due to the efforts of so many partners including all of you each and every day in local communities. We are all in this together and every provider has a role to play in helping end this pandemic.

This Thursday, April 15th is when all adults age 16 and older will be eligible for vaccine in Washington. We have recently affectionately coined this term “*Vax Day*” in Washington and while we expect many people eagerly to roll up their sleeves, others may be more reluctant to do so. This can be due to challenges with accessing vaccine itself but could also be due to distrust or misinformation. These concerns may be even more so for the very communities that have been most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

The good news is that as trusted sources of information, healthcare providers play an extremely crucial role in influencing vaccine confidence. In fact, studies have shown that a strong endorsement from a provider is one of the most important factors in a patient’s decision on whether to get vaccinated. As vaccine supply continues to increase in our state, we want to make every effort to ensure that everyone in our state understands the importance of vaccinations.

As a fellow healthcare provider, I seek your help today in serving as champions for the importance of people not hesitating or waiting to get their COVID-19 vaccines. We want you to share credible, timely, and accurate COVID-19 vaccine information with your patients to help them move from vaccine *hesitance* to vaccine *confidence*.

To support you, our agency has created a [provider toolkit](#) with talking points, discussion guides, and other resources to help you have effective conversations about the COVID-19 vaccine. You can also visit the DOH [Vaccine FAQ](#) to brush up on COVID-19 vaccine information and prepare to answer the most commonly asked patient questions.

It often helps to hear from other providers about how you can be a COVID-19 vaccine champion for your patients. Recently, the department hosted an [Expert Panel](#) with providers across the state to discuss how they address vaccine hesitancy, tools and resources they recommend, and ways any provider can help encourage patients to get the COVID-19 vaccine using holistic, trauma-informed strategies.

As trusted voices in your local communities, you play a key role in influencing individual decisions to get vaccinated. Together we can and will vaccinate Washingtonians and put this pandemic behind us once

and for all. All of us at DOH stand ready to support you in getting the word out about the importance of vaccines.

I could not be more grateful for your work during this pandemic – and beyond – to keep Washingtonians healthy, safe, and protected. Thank you.

Best,



Umair A. Shah, MD, MPH
Secretary of Health

Resources:

COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Providers

- <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/COVID19/HealthcareProviders/VaccineInformationforHealthcareProviders/ToolkitandResources>

Provider Discussion Guide- Building Confidence in COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines

- <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-130-ProviderMRNAVaccinesDiscussionGuide.pdf>

Provider Discussion Guide- Building Confidence in the Johnson & Johnson Vaccine

- <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/820-147-BuildingConfidenceInJohnsonAndJohnsonVaccine.pdf>

Vaccine FAQ

- <http://www.doh.wa.gov/covidvaccine/faq>

Expert Panel: Addressing Patient Concerns About COVID-19 Vaccines

- <https://youtu.be/YFCj9mKslt8>

