

# Vaccine Access in the District of Columbia

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A partnership with one retail pharmacy

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# AGENDA

- ▶ Background
- ▶ COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution
- ▶ Non-COVID-19 Vaccine Access
- ▶ Successes & Challenges

# BACKGROUND LAWS & REGULATIONS

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# Pharmacy Laws Pre-COVID

- Immunization Training Required for Pharmacists in DC
  - ACPE approved immunization training (20 hours):
    - Hands-on injection technique
    - Clinical evaluation of indications and contraindications of vaccines, and the recognition and treatment of emergency reactions to vaccines
  - Current CPR certificate in basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation
  - Minimum 2 hours CE with license renewal
- Vaccines administered by a pharmacist allowed by DC Law
  - Age 12 years and older for Hepatitis, HPV, Tetanus, Tdap, Meningococcal, H. Influenzae, Pneumococcal, Influenza, Shingles, Epidemic Vaccines Called for by WHO via written protocol signed by DC licensed physician
    - Excludes all live vaccines and travel vaccines

# Pharmacy Pandemic Laws & Regulations

- Public Readiness and Emergency preparedness (PREP) Act (3/17/2020)
- Third Amendment allowed for pharmacists to administer any ACIP recommended vaccine to those aged 3 years to 18 years (8/24/2020)
- Guidance for PREP Act Coverage for Qualified Pharmacy Technicians and State-Authorized Pharmacy Interns for Childhood Vaccines, COVID-19 Vaccines, and COVID-19 Testing (10/20/2020)
  - Allowed Interns and Pharmacy Technicians to administer COVID-19 and all ACIP recommended vaccines for ages 3 years to 18 years
- Fourth Amendment allowed for pharmacists and technicians to administer COVID-19 vaccines (12/3/2020)

# Safeway Pharmacy

- Retail grocery store with pharmacy
- 10 Safeway Pharmacies in DC

Store	Address	Ward
1276	6500 Piney Branch Rd, NW Washington, DC 20012	4
1445	2845 Alabama Ave. S.E. Washington, DC 20020	7
2737	490 L Street, N.W. Washington, DC 20001	6
2808	3830 Georgia Ave., NW Washington, DC 20011	4
2892	1100 4th Street, SW, Suite 150 Washington, DC 20024	6
2912	1855 Wisconsin Ave, NW Washington, DC 20007	2
3217	415 14th Street SE Washington, DC 20003	6
4202	1747 Columbia Road, N.W. Washington, DC 20009	1
4270	1601 Maryland Ave., NE Washington, DC 20002	5
4832	5545 Conn. Ave., N.W. Washington, DC 20015	3

# COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

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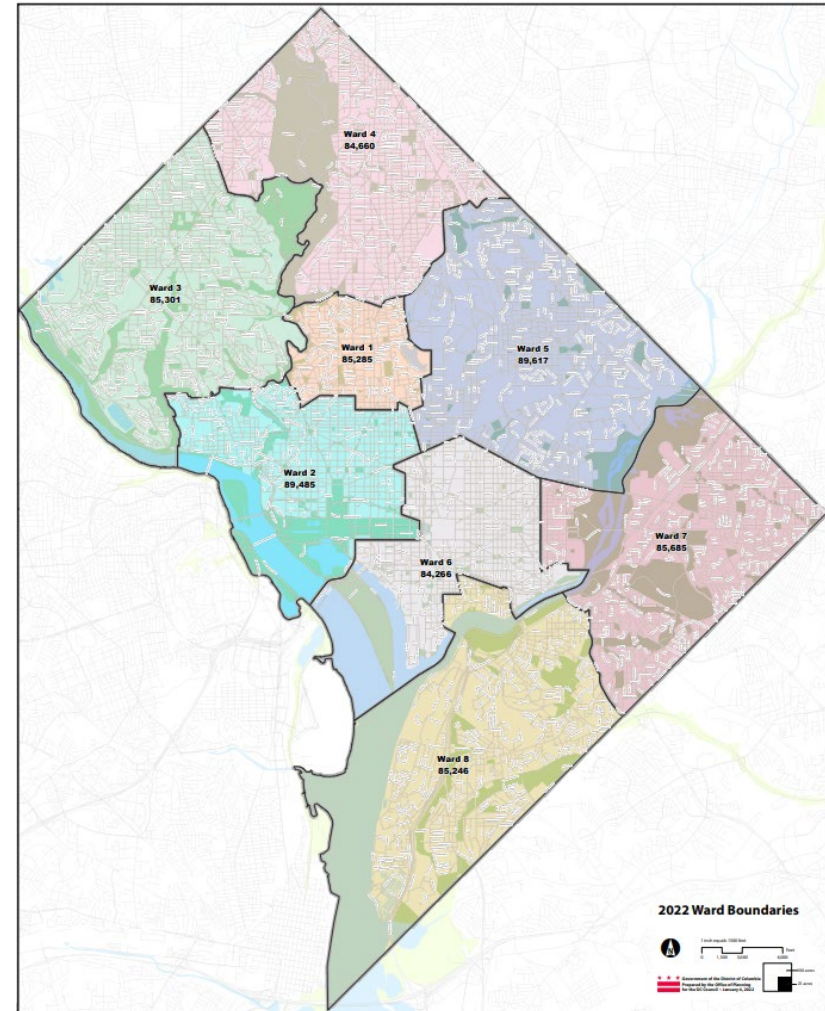
# Vaccine Approval and Allocation

- First vaccines for COVID-19 receive EUA approval
  - Pfizer 12/11/2020
  - Moderna 12/18/2020
- COVID-19 Vaccine first came available by state allocation
- Week 2- 12/21/2020
  - DC Health allocated doses to Safeway and Giant to expand DC's Phase 1 access points



# Expansion of Access Points

- Expansion to DC Health coordinated access points to increase equity
  - 8 Wards
  - 10 Safeway Pharmacies



[https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/page\\_content/attachments/All%20Wards%20Map%202022\\_Population.pdf](https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/page_content/attachments/All%20Wards%20Map%202022_Population.pdf)

# Initial Partnership

- Started 12/28/2020 with in-store clinics
- Quickly re-evaluated demand and moved to Senior Centers
  - Eventually moved on to pod sites and schools as vaccine was approved for different age groups.
- Participated in Pod clinics at various locations in DC (reoccurring vaccine clinics at the same location for weeks at a time or longer)
  - Senior Centers (began Jan 2021)
  - Recreational Centers (began Feb 2021)
  - DC Convention Center (Spring 2021)\*
  - Middle and High Schools (Summer 2021)
  - Pop-up clinics in Parks (Summer 2021)

# DC Vaccine Exchange

- DC Health system for organizations to submit requests for on-site vaccine clinics provided by local DC Health COVID-19 enrolled providers
  - Platform allowed for schools and other organizations to connect directly with vaccine providers.
  - Cut out the middle man during peak vaccine months (flu and COVID-19 booster season)
- <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccineexchange>



# Gap in Childhood Immunizations

- Summer 2021- adolescents and children under DCH pop-up model
- Middle and High School pod clinics
  - Clinics operated 4 days a week
  - Provided COVID immunizations and ACIP recommended immunizations

# Non-COVID-19 Vaccine Access

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# VFC Enrollment

- Provider Profile Form
- Provider Agreement
- Vaccine Management Plan
  - Routine Storage & Handling Plan
  - Emergency Plan
- Site Visits
- Site Audits
- Re-enrollment (yearly)
- Safeway Enrolled Pharmacy #3217
  - Extra refrigerator purchased to hold VFC vaccine

# VFC Vaccine Ordering, Payment and Documentation

- District of Columbia Immunization Information System (DOCIIS)
  - Only immunization providers, school nurse, childcare facility staff member are allowed access
- Vaccine Ordering Management System (VOMS)
  - Manually decrement vaccines administered in VOMS
- SOW between DC Health and Safeway to cover labor and VFC eligible uninsured patients
- Department of Health Care Finance involvement
  - Opened Medicaid Billing for VFC provided vaccines

# Reimbursement Pathway

- DC submitted Medicaid State Plan Amendment to CMS to allow for Medicaid reimbursement of administration fee to pharmacies for VFC-supplied vaccines
- DHCF Transmittal outlines billing process for pharmacies to receive administration fee
  - Participating pharmacies should bill DHCF directly using the Medicaid/ICP Identification Number. Submit to Magellan PBM using the following NCPDP billing information: BIN: 018407; PCN: DCMC018407; and Group ID: DCMEDICAID
- DHCF Monitoring and Coordination with DC Health: Pharmacy Benefit Manager Weekly Report on Pediatric Vaccines Furnished by Pharmacies
  - Troubleshooting with Pharmacy on Claims Submission



# Immunization Attendance Policy Enforcement

- DC Law requires certification of immunization to attend school, unless the student is exempted pursuant to the law
  - A student may be excluded if not compliant after 20 days from the start of school\*; absences coded as unexcused due to immunization
- Prior to start of the SY22-23, immunization compliance was hovering at 75% District-wide
- DC Health and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) collaborated to enforce a law that had not been enforced in over 10 years
  - Increased outreach to families
  - New data systems and training for school health suite staff
  - Increased vaccine-access points with VFC providers to provide:
    - School-located clinics;
    - Vax-only appointments at health centers

# Vaccine Access for Policy Enforcement

- Enforcement of the Immunization Attendance Policy for routine pediatric immunizations and COVID-19 vaccines for 2022-2023 school year
- Multiple Access Points in each Ward
- Safeway VFC Clinics
  - Onsite at schools
  - 10/29/22 thru 12/14/22
  - 17 VFC Clinics

		<b>Official Notice Sent to Non-Compliant Students</b>	<b>First Date of Exclusion of Non-Compliant Students</b>
<b>Routine Pediatric Immunization</b>	<b>Pre-K 3 through Grade 5</b>	September 7, 2022	October 11, 2022
	<b>Grades 6-12</b>	October 3, 2022	November 4, 2022
<b>COVID-19 Vaccination (For Students Age 12 and Older)</b>		November 21, 2022	January 3, 2023

<https://osse.dc.gov/page/district-columbia-immunization-attendance-policy>

# Successes & Challenges

# Successes!

- Provided over 238K COVID vaccines since the beginning of the pandemic
- VFC Clinics provided 408 children and adolescents 890 vaccines in 2022
- Varicella outbreak in DC- provided 137 children and adolescents varicella vaccines
- Safeway successfully became a VFC provider for site #3217 in DC
- Strong partnership between a retail pharmacy and health department
  - Driving immunization changes in DC

# Pharmacy Challenges

- VFC Vaccines have low reimbursement for administration
  - Harder to cover labor costs of pharmacists
- Consent
  - Challenging to get parent/guardian to complete paperwork in advance.
  - If consent & release form was not completed in advance, child would not be able to get vaccinated
- Workflow/labor model
  - Work-in progress during the beginning of the VFC clinics
  - Hard to gauge how many children would show up when pre-registration was not complete
- Schools where English was not the primary language of the parent/guardians
  - Consent forms in Spanish
  - Translators/ volunteers needed for parents who were illiterate
- Completing VFC Enrollment
  - Not set up for pharmacy providers

# DC Health Challenges

- Identifying funding sources and pathways
- Establishing a reimbursement pathway for VFC with our Department of Health Care Finance

# End of the Public Health Emergency flexibilities

- Pharmacists return to the individual state pharmacist immunization scope of practice
  - In DC, pharmacists are unable to administer vaccines to children under 12 years old (except flu and COVID-19)
  - In DC, pharmacists are unable to administer live vaccines
  - Technicians are unable to administer vaccines to children (except flu and COVID-19)
  - Under the PREP Act pharmacists, interns, students and technicians can still administer Flu and COVID-19 vaccines to people ages 3+
    - With variable success and significant school coordination
- Presents an opportunity to match present and future models of care through legislation or rulemaking
  - Proposed an emergency rulemaking to allow vaccination of all ACIP\* recommended vaccines for ages 3+

# Sustainability & Lessons Learned

- Need laws supporting pharmacist administration of all ACIP recommended vaccinations ages 3 years and older
- Need easier mechanisms in place for pharmacy to become VFC partners
- Best to meet people where they are to increase access to vaccination
- Technology to support electronic consent of vaccinations
- Identify funding to cover labor costs of vaccine clinics



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# Questions?