FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wilmington VA Medical Center Readies to Begin Offering COVID-19 Booster Shots

WILMINGTON, Del. — Wilmington VA Medical Center and affiliated Community Based Outpatient Clinics have begun offering Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine booster shots under Emergency Use Authorization.

This decision follows the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) authorization and CDC recommendation for a booster dose of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to:

- People 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings should receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series

- People aged 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions should receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series

- People aged 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions may receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risk

- People aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting may receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks

"Our facility knows that fighting the COVID-19 pandemic is truly a team effort and we will continue to make sure we are doing all we can to protect Veterans, Veteran caregivers, staff and the Delaware and South Jersey communities against COVID-19," said Vince Kane, Medical Center Director. "Our staff are currently offering Pfizer-BioNTech booster shots to those at highest risk, following the FDA and CDC recommendations."

The safety and care of Veterans is VA's top priority, as well as ensuring the health and welfare of its workforce. Wilmington VA Medical Center and affiliated CBOCs have begun offering the Pfizer-BioNTech booster vaccines via drive-thru clinic, September 27 to Veterans and employees, first prioritizing those persons who are 65 years and older, residents of long-term care facilities, and people aged 50-64 years with underlying conditions. VA will also offer the booster to Veterans, their spouses, caregivers and CHAMPVA recipients under the authority of the SAVE LIVES Act, as supply and capacity permits. The Save Lives Act which was signed into law in March 2021expanded VA's authority to offer vaccine to include Veterans not traditionally eligible for VHA care, and others including spouses and caregivers of Veterans.

Veterans who receive care in VA and are due for booster shots will be identified through primary care teams, then contacted and advised of the recommended booster shots, which may be offered at scheduled appointments or on a walk-in/drive-thru basis. Veterans who received a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine outside of VA, as well as persons who received a Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in VA for whom we don't have records of their high-risk condition, will need to contact 1-302-994-2511 x5200. Those who received the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine under authorization of the SAVE LIVES Act and are due for a booster shot, may consult with their physician if they have questions about whether they should receive a booster, and contact us at 1-302-994-2511 x5200 for an appointment or information about walk-in hours.

CDC advises that people can get both the COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine at the same time. Veterans receiving care at VA who wish to get a booster shot can get both shots together during the same visit.

Currently, only the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been authorized as a booster shot. FDA and CDC continue to review data to determine whether and when a booster might be recommended for recipients of the Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen) COVID-19 vaccine(s). Wilmington VA Medical Center and affiliated CBOCs will plan to offer boosters of these vaccines if authorized and recommended.