

September 27, 2022

On September 12, 2022, the Pennsylvania Department of Health released a statement regarding the implementation of guidance using the definition of Up to Date. A copy of this statement is included for reference. **The September 12 statement has now been archived.** Today's statement describes the reasoning behind this action and provides a summary of next steps regarding new CDC and CMS guidance.

On Friday September 23, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated guidance for healthcare facilities of all types:

- [Infection Control: Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\) | CDC](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 | CDC](#)
- [Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages | CDC](#)

CMS also released two updates for nursing homes:

- [QSO-20-39-NH REVISED 09/23/2022](#)
- [QSO-20-38-NH REVISED 09/23/2022](#)

In the new guidance, vaccination status, including whether a person is Up to Date, is no longer used to inform source control, screening testing, or post-exposure recommendations including quarantine. All patients, residents and staff, regardless of vaccination status, are generally treated the same in the new guidance. **Therefore, the information provided in the September 12 statement is no longer relevant.**

According to CDC, these updates have been made to [reflect the high levels of vaccine- and infection-induced immunity and the availability of effective treatments and prevention tools](#). Additionally, to streamline and consolidate existing healthcare guidance, CDC guidance specific to nursing homes has been incorporated into the [general healthcare infection prevention and control guidance](#).

Updated HANs are forthcoming, and the Department anticipates they will closely mirror CDC and CMS guidance. In the interim, infection preventionists and clinical leaders are encouraged to become familiar with the guidance and update facility policies as appropriate.

It is important to note *everyone* is still encouraged to remain [Up to Date](#) on vaccines, including receiving the bivalent booster vaccine and future recommended COVID-19 vaccines, for the best possible protection against COVID-19.

Finally, the removal of vaccination status to inform infection prevention and control measures does not change the requirements for reporting within the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). Please continue to follow [NHSN guidance for the COVID module](#).

For questions about this notice or any public health concerns, please contact your local health department or call 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

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On September 1, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a [new statement](#) about the importance of receiving updated versions of COVID-19 boosters. These updated boosters have added components that protect against Omicron BA.4 and BA.5, helping to boost waning protection from previous COVID-19 booster doses. The FDA and CDC refer to these as bivalent boosters and the earlier version as a monovalent booster. The monovalent booster [is no longer authorized by the FDA](#) nor [recommended by CDC](#) for persons age 12 and older. These persons are recommended to receive the updated bivalent boosters as soon as possible and according to details in the [CDC Stay Up to Date Guidance](#).

Updates to the [CDC Stay Up to Date Guidance](#) website now say that to be considered **Up to Date**, one must have received an *updated* (bivalent) booster dose, if eligible. An individual is eligible if it has been more than 2 months since completing a primary COVID-19 vaccination series or receiving a COVID-19 booster. However, this change in recommendations comes at a time when the bivalent booster doses are not yet as widely available as we would like.

The Department anticipates updated guidance may be released from CMS, CDC, or both regarding the implications of this change for long-term care facilities, hospitals, and other healthcare settings. In the interim, COVID-19 prevention activities (e.g., weekly testing; quarantine on admission) based on the Up to Date vaccination status of an individual can be conducted based on previous standards for booster doses for Pennsylvania facilities. As a temporary measure, an individual who has received either monovalent booster(s) as previously recommended or a bivalent booster dose can be treated as Up to Date, at this time. This can be thought of as a “grace period” until more of the long-term care population can receive a bivalent booster dose.

Recommendations in [PA-HAN-627](#) for long-term care facilities and in [PA-HAN-624](#) for all healthcare facilities still apply. As bivalent vaccine doses become more widely available, this guidance is expected to change; more information will be forthcoming. For questions, please contact your local health department or call 1-877-PA-HEALTH.