

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Department of Health Care Finance



Office of the Senior Deputy Director/Medicaid Director

MDL # 21-05

MEDICAID DIRECTOR LETTER

TO: All Interested Parties

DATE: September 29, 2021

RE: ARPA Section 9817 Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive Initiative Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this letter is to provide an overview of the District's implementation of Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive Initiative [approved](#) under its American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) [Initial Spending Plan and Narrative for Enhanced Funding for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services](#) (HCBS).

Background

The District has received partial approval of its Initial Narrative and Spending Plan effective August 31, 2021. Identified in the District's partially approved plan was the Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive Initiative. Under this initiative, the District aims to reimburse HCBS providers for the reasonable costs incurred, beginning December 2020 forward, to incentivize direct care workers to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The District will provide a one-time payment to HCBS providers for the costs associated with successfully encouraging staff to get vaccinated via implementation of an incentive structure (i.e. staff bonus payments, paid leave, or other incentive structure approved by the District).

In the upcoming weeks, the District will release a Request for Applications (RFA) with additional detail on required demonstrations, submissions, and attestations for providers seeking funding through the Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive. In the interim, the District believes it is important to give preliminary guidance to home and community-based providers who are planning additional efforts to encourage vaccination near [DC Health's announced September 30th deadline](#) for all health care workers to receive at least the first dose of the Pfizer or Moderna (or one dose of Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 Vaccine. As a reminder, this requirement applies to:

- All licensed, certified and registered health professionals;
- All EMS providers such as paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs); and
- All unlicensed healthcare workers (i.e. patient care technicians, personal care aides, direct support professionals, environmental services staff).

Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive Initiative Overview and Frequently Asked Question(s)

An initial overview of the Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive Initiative is provided in a frequently asked questions (FAQ) format below:

What providers are eligible to apply for funds under the Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive?

Home Health Agencies, Adult Day Health Programs, Behavioral Health Rehabilitation service providers (i.e. MHRS, ASARS providers), Supported Employment service providers, and any agency providing 1915(c) Waiver Home and Community-Based Services will be eligible to apply for funding.

What will providers be required to demonstrate in their application to be eligible for Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive funding? At a minimum, provider agencies will be required to demonstrate/submit the following at the time of application:

- Written plan and procedures detailing the incentive structure the agency intends to or has implemented to encourage direct care worker vaccinations
- A demonstration of costs incurred or planned expenditures for implementing the incentive structure. The demonstration of costs should be closely tied to the goals of the written plan
- List of employed health care workers (including name and an additional identifying element for providers without NPIs, like their address)
- Information on vaccination status of each health care worker; information on current vaccination rates among employed health care workers

What will providers be required to attest to in their application to be eligible for Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive funding? At a minimum, provider agencies will be required to attest the following:

- Funds received under the Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive initiative will be used solely for the purpose of funding or supporting the costs of approved vaccination incentive activities
- Commitment to ongoing documentation or reporting requirements as detailed in the RFA (i.e. expenditures, vaccination rates, verification of employee vaccination status, etc.)
- Any health care worker identified by the provider agency remains actively employed or was employed at the time the provider agency's vaccination incentive program went into effect

How will the total amount of funding under the Direct Care Worker Vaccination Incentive available to each provider agency be determined?

- The District will reimburse Home and Community-Based Service providers for the costs associated with staff bonus payments, paid leave, or other incentive structure approved by the District, up to \$120 per health care worker
- In the event a health care worker (with an assigned NPI) is employed by multiple provider agencies that are applying for incentive funds, the District may assign the health care worker to a single agency based on hours worked over recent months

- This calculation will determine the maximum amount of funding available to each provider agency. However, providers must also 1) demonstrate costs or planned expenditures up to the maximum amount to qualify for the full award and 2) ultimately confirm vaccination of each staff person included in the total number of health care workers used to determine the maximum funding award to avoid recoupments

Is the District developing an incentive structure for Participant-Directed Workers (PDWs) providing services under the 1915 (c) Home- and Community-Based Services Waiver for the Elderly and Persons with Physical Disabilities: Services My Way Program?

Yes. The District is finalizing a separate process to make vaccination incentives, not to exceed \$120 in value, directly available to PDWs demonstrating that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The District will provide additional information in the coming days on the vaccination incentive structure for PDWs and the process to claim the incentive.

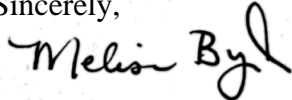
Website Information

Additional information and updates for providers can be found on the DHCF website at <https://dhcf.dc.gov/page/arpa-hcbs-planning>.

Contact

DHCF will make ongoing updates to this FAQ. If you have questions for inclusion in a future update, please contact Eugene Simms, Special Assistant, at either eugene.simms@dc.gov, or (202) 442-5819.

Sincerely,



Melisa Byrd, Senior Deputy Director/State Medicaid Director
District of Columbia Government, Department of Health Care Finance