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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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Dear Colleagues,

We thank you for your tireless efforts and sacrifices in this continued fight against COVID-19. As we face the next chapter in the pandemic, including the more contagious delta variant, rising cases, and imminent back-to-school, the urgency to continue to vaccinate North Carolinians and take additional preventive measures at the local level is increasing rapidly.

Through an analysis of vaccine rates and population density, NCDHHS has identified counties at higher risk of COVID-19 outbreak. **You are receiving this communication because you are a provider in one of the counties at higher risk for widespread COVID-19 transmission.**

How can you take action? We urge you to **immediately** ask your patients about vaccine status and counsel them about getting vaccinated. Research shows that medical professionals are among the **most trusted** sources when making a decision regarding COVID-19 vaccination. Please make this a topic of conversation in all your patient visits and interactions—these [resources](#) can help support your efforts.

If you are already a COVID-19 vaccine provider, please continue to keep vaccine on hand for those patients who are ready to act on your advice. Our CVMS Vaccine Marketplace and NCDHHS team are available to you to make it easy to ensure that vaccine is always on your shelves.

If you are not a COVID-19 vaccine provider, please consider:

1. Becoming a COVID-19 vaccine provider. Start here with our [one-pager](#) and [Vaccine Provider Toolkit](#) and reach out through this [link](#) if you have questions about enrollment or would like personal assistance.
2. Otherwise, and until your enrollment in the COVID-19 vaccine program is complete, **actively refer your patients** to vaccinating providers in your community. You can find vaccine providers at [vaccine.gov](#), and we also encourage you to develop referral relationships with your [local health department](#), pharmacies, and primary care practices in your area. Many providers and pharmacies are offering walk-in vaccinations, so preparation and advance planning on the part of your patients should be minimal.

For all providers, we look to you to provide leadership in your communities. We ask you to review and implement the recent [position statement](#) by the NC Healthcare Association to make vaccine a requirement for your healthcare staff. Also, you may be asked by your local health department or members of our

Healthier Together team to speak to community groups or offer vaccine to persons beyond your patient panel. You play a critical role! We urge you to take any action to prevent outbreaks in your county.

While vaccines will continue to be the best way to fight COVID-19, we recognize that cases will continue to rise in areas with low vaccination rates and ask that providers encourage testing among their patients when they are symptomatic or have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive person, **regardless of vaccination status**. Even if your facility does not offer COVID-19 testing, patients can find a no-cost testing event or location near them through [Find My Testing Place](#). All North Carolinians can order a [Pixel by Labcorp COVID-19 PCR Test Home Collection Kit](#) to be delivered directly to their home.

Finally, we are encouraging providers to also **offer monoclonal antibody therapy** to COVID-19 patients. Monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) are widely available under emergency use authorization (EUA) and can help to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death in COVID-19 patients. As a result of recent EUA expansion, mAb product REGEN-COV can now also be used as post-exposure prophylaxis in certain patients. You may have already received more complete information about mAbs from NCDHHS' vaccineinfo mailbox - please review at your convenience. Providers capable of administering mAbs in accordance with the [EUA](#) can order directly from the federal stockpile [HERE](#). For additional resources and guidance, please check out the [Federal Monoclonal Antibody Playbook](#) and [NC DHHS COVID-19 Monoclonal Antibodies Treatment webpage](#).

Let's keep working together to get our vaccination rates as high as possible. Thank you for your continued support.



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