

Use this COVID-19 vaccine script when patients call

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As COVID-19 vaccines continue to roll out, health systems and physician practices are getting overwhelmed by phone calls from patients. With an expected high volume of patient inquiries about COVID-19 vaccinations, an AMA template can help physicians and practice staff properly respond using a script for their telephone message and patient portal.

The AMA has learned that some states are redirecting people with questions about vaccination to physician practices or hospitals. However, because few physicians are directly receiving or administering COVID-19 vaccines now, they may not have actionable and current information about how to schedule and receive the vaccine. The new AMA resource is designed to help proactively inform patients about their local vaccine distribution and administration options. It helps avert confusion and stress among patients while lessening the administrative burden on an already busy practice.

Health systems and physician practices may also opt to proactively provide information about availability and how to access COVID-19 vaccines through their patient portal. This may help lessen the number of calls received while assisting patients in accessing important information. The patient portal should be used to direct patients to the most reliable source of information in the practice's state—whether that is the health department website, state vaccination coordinator, dedicated call center or pharmacy. Stay updated with the AMA to get the latest information on COVID-19 vaccination .

The COVID-19 vaccine script is intended to be modified to reflect different circumstances within a physician's practice, community, county and state. It can also be updated as vaccine protocols, distribution and administration procedures change. Practices can use the templated language on their website and social media accounts for further outreach.

A practice's telephone message to callers should state their office name and the option to press a number to access information about the COVID-19 vaccine. From there, physicians have two options to choose from. If COVID-19 vaccination is being provided at their office, the messaging system can

direct the caller to schedule an appointment. However, if the vaccine is not being provided at the office, a practice may choose from two scripts the one that is most appropriate for their local circumstances:

- Option 1: At this time, the state of [name of state] task force is continuing to develop a vaccine distribution plan. We will post updates on the practice website as we receive them.
- Option 2: Vaccine distribution is currently being managed by [Name of the state agency] on a priority basis. Please contact the agency at [phone number; email; website].

From there, the practice message should include how to access the most up-to-date information about receiving the vaccine. After creating a telephone message, physicians can follow the COVID-19 vaccine script for the patient portal.

Learn how the Ad Council and COVID Coalition are answering health professionals' COVID-19 vaccination questions.

The AMA has developed frequently-asked-questions documents on COVID-19 vaccination covering safety, allocation and distribution, administration and more. There are two FAQs, one designed to answer patients' questions, and another to address physicians' COVID-19 vaccine questions.

Additionally, the AMA Ed Hub™ offers a CME course on COVID-19 vaccines, which allows physicians and other health professionals to earn up to 17.5 credits. This course covers five topics: COVID-19 vaccine basics, prioritization and delivery, vaccine delivery equity, ethical implications, and public health safeguards.

Other tools and guidance can be found at the AMA's COVID-19 resource center, which offers a library of the materials from the JAMA Network™, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization.