

BILH Resuming COVID-19 Vaccination for Patients Talking Points and FAQs

February 23, 2021

Talking Points

- Beginning this week, Beth Israel Lahey Health will resume offering limited new appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine to patients in the following groups who are eligible under the current phase of the state's distribution plan.
 - People who are 65 and older
 - People between 18 and 64 who have two or more certain medical conditions that put them at higher risk of developing severe illness due to COVID-19:
 - People who live or work in low-income and affordable senior housing

- **If we have identified you as eligible based on our review of your medical records**, you will receive an email, text or pre-recorded phone message inviting you to schedule an appointment at one of our 10 community vaccination clinics.
 - **All eligible patients will not receive an invitation right away.** We will send invitations on a rolling basis as we receive vaccine shipments from the state.

- **If we have not identified you as eligible**, it may be because we don't have all the medical and non-medical information we need to verify your eligibility.
 - If you fall in this category, you will receive an email, text or pre-recorded phone message asking you to let us know if you believe you qualify. You may not receive this communication right away because it will be sent to patients on a rolling basis.
 - If you don't believe you qualify, no action is required.
 - If you do believe you qualify, you just need to complete a brief form to attest that the information you provide to us is accurate. **You will not need to contact your doctor or hospital for proof that you have any medical conditions.**
 - If you do qualify, it still may take time for you to receive an invitation to schedule an appointment with us because of limited vaccine supply.

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine from BILH is one option you have to get vaccinated. You also have access to vaccination sites offered by the state, retail pharmacies and other organizations. The state has developed resources to assist residents with finding these other locations, which can be accessed by:
 - Checking the state's new searchable directory at vaxfinder.mass.gov
 - Calling 2-1-1
 - Calling 877-211-6277

FAQs by Topic

Medical Conditions

Q: What medical conditions does the state consider when determining eligibility for vaccination in this phase?

A: In Massachusetts, individuals with **two or more** of these medical conditions are currently eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine:

- Current cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Down Syndrome
- Heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity and severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 kg/m² or higher). You can calculate your BMI here: [Adult BMI Calculator](#)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Smoking or history of smoking
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus
- Moderate to severe asthma

Q: Does BILH require me to provide proof of my medical conditions?

A: **No, you do not need copies of medical records or a doctor's note** to confirm you have these conditions to receive a vaccination invitation from BILH. We only send invitations to patients whose medical records show this information, so when you get an invitation you don't need any documentation to schedule your appointment with us, and you don't need to bring any documentation when you arrive for your appointment with us.

Q: I have two or more of the medical conditions that should qualify me to get vaccinated now, but I got an email telling me that I don't qualify. What can I do?

A: All patients whose medical records do not list them as having two or more of the medical conditions required for them to be vaccinated now will have the opportunity to verify that they are eligible. You will receive an email, text or phone call from us, asking you to review the eligibility criteria and confirm you are eligible to receive the vaccine. The confirmation can be done online, or verbally over the phone. **You will not need to contact your doctor or hospital for proof that you have any medical conditions.**

Vaccination Sites and Appointment Scheduling

Q: Where are BILH's COVID-19 vaccination sites?

A: BILH operates vaccination clinics in:

- Beverly
- Brookline
- Burlington
- Cambridge
- Chelsea
- Dorchester
- Gloucester
- Newburyport
- North Quincy
- Plymouth

When scheduling an appointment, you will be able to choose the location that works best for you.

Q: I'm eligible to get the vaccine now, according to the state's rollout plan. How do I schedule an appointment at one of the BILH vaccination sites?

A: BILH's vaccine clinics are only available to recent patients of our hospitals and affiliated providers. In you are a recent patient, you will receive an invitation when you are eligible to get vaccinated, based on the current phase of the state's vaccine rollout plan, as well as BILH's available vaccine supply.

Appointments cannot be scheduled until you receive an invitation, which will be sent via email, text, phone or postcard. The invitation will provide instructions on how to schedule an appointment. Due to limited supply, we cannot invite everyone who is eligible at the same time; invitations will be sent on a rolling basis.

Q: I previously received an email (or text) from BILH, with a link to schedule an appointment. I just tried to click the link and it's no longer valid. What can I do to schedule an appointment now?

A: Invitations to schedule an appointment are valid for 21 days. If more than 21 days have passed since you received the invitation, don't worry. We will send you another invitation in the coming days or weeks. New invitations are being sent on a rolling basis, due to vaccine supply constraints. So it may take a few days or weeks to receive your new invitation.

Q: Besides BILH's vaccination sites, where else can I get vaccinated?

A: At this time, eligible Massachusetts residents can be vaccinated at:

- **Large vaccination sites run by the state**, such as:
 - Gillette Stadium
 - Fenway Park
 - Eastfield Mall in Springfield
 - DoubleTree Hilton Hotel in Danvers
 - Reggie Lewis Center in Roxbury
- Regional **vaccine clinics** operated by a local board of health;
- **Over 100 local pharmacies** and retail locations administering the vaccine; or
- If you live in [public or private affordable low income senior housing](#) there may be an onsite clinic being planned at your property. Check with your management company.

Q: What types of housing fall within the category of “low-income and affordable senior housing”?

A: Public and private low income and affordable senior housing is defined as any residential premises available for lease by older or disabled individuals which is financed or subsidized in whole or in part by state or federal housing programs established primarily to furnish housing rather than housing and personal services. Specifically, this includes the following types of age-restricted housing properties:

- Public housing properties designated primarily for older adults that are owned/operated by Local Housing Authorities. This includes those public housing properties owned by a Housing Authority but managed by a private company.
- Privately owned rental properties designated for older adults that are financed in whole or part through resources made available from DHCD, MassHousing, or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and in which the majority of units are restricted to residents earning less than 80% of Area Median Income.

Q: At the state-run vaccination clinics, people who are 75 and older are able to bring a companion to their appointment, and that person can also be vaccinated. Will BILH vaccinate companions too?

A: No, due to supply constraints, BILH cannot vaccinate anyone who accompanies any patient to an appointment with us. If you are 75 and older and prefer to go to a location that will also vaccinate your companion, you can schedule an appointment at one of the state-run vaccination sites.

Q: Will the state-run clinics vaccinate companions of people who are younger than 75?

A: The state-run clinics will only vaccinate companions of eligible residents who are 75 or older. Companions of anyone younger than 75 will not be vaccinated at the state-run clinics.

Phone Message Recording

The following is a template message that can be customized by a hospital/business unit and recorded on phone lines.

Thank you for calling **NAME OF ENTITY**, part of Beth Israel Lahey Health. Please listen to this important information about COVID-19 vaccines.

Beth Israel Lahey Health is now offering limited new appointments for the COVID-19 vaccine to patients who are eligible under the current phase of the state's distribution plan.

If we have identified you as eligible, you will receive an email, text or pre-recorded phone message inviting you to schedule an appointment at one of our 10 community vaccination clinics. You cannot schedule a vaccine appointment with us until you have received an invitation from us. Even if you are eligible now, you will not get an invitation right away due to very limited vaccine supply.

Getting the COVID-19 vaccine from BILH is one option you have to get vaccinated. You also have access to vaccination sites offered by the state, retail pharmacies and other organizations. We encourage you to get the vaccine when it's your turn. For information on locations accepting new appointments and the process for scheduling appointments at those locations, visit the state's website at mass.gov/covid-19-vaccine or call 2-1-1.

If you have a specific question for your health care team, please [press **x** or stay on the line].

Information Available for Posting on BILH Electronic Health Record Systems

(i.e., PatientSite, My Lahey Chart, etc.)

COVID-19 Vaccination Information

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