Massachusetts Caregiver/Companion COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility

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Effective Thursday, February 11th, an individual who accompanies a person age 75 or older to one of four mass vaccination sites to receive the vaccine will be eligible to receive the vaccine too, if they have an appointment booked. **Both the companion and the individual age 75 or older must have an appointment for the same day and both individuals must be present. Only one companion is permitted. The companion must attest that they are accompanying the individual to the appointment.**

Companions may begin booking appointments the morning of February 11th.

Individuals age 75 and older should make an appointment to get vaccinated as soon as possible. The COVID-19 vaccine is safe and free.

- The mass vaccination sites (Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Fenway Park in Boston, Eastfield Mall in Springfield, and the Doubletree Hotel in Danvers) have the most capacity and availability for appointments. 53,000 appointments will be opened at these sites on Thursday (2/11).

- **Getting vaccinated at one of the mass vaccination sites is safe, easy and age-friendly. These sites:**
  - Strive to provide an experience without long lines or long wait times
  - Allow one person to accompany you to the appointment, if you need assistance
  - Are fully wheelchair accessible, do not require people to use stairs and have some wheelchairs available on-site
  - Have accessible drop-off and pick-up areas
  - Gillette Stadium, the DoubleTree Hotel in Danvers, and the Eastfield Mall Springfield, have accessible parking available
  - Have accessible restroom and seating areas
  - Require every person who enters to wear a mask and support social distancing throughout the site
  - Offer vaccinations for staff who are administering the vaccines and give staff access to regular COVID-19 testing to ensure safety
  - Have friendly staff on hand to help guide the individual through the process

Older adults should not accept calls offering assistance from someone they do not know or trust.

For information on the COVID-19 vaccines for people ages 75 and older visit mass.gov/covidvaccine75.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Question: How does the caregiver/companion book an appointment?**
  - You must book a separate appointment, one for individual who is age 75 and older and one for the caregiver/companion. Go to mass.gov/covidvaccine and schedule two separate appointments at either the same time or adjacent.
  - For the caregiver appointment, select the option '*Individual accompanying someone who is age 75+ to their vaccination appointment (both must be present at the same time, both must have same day appointments).'* You may also be asked to orally attest onsite that you are accompanying an individual age 75 or older who otherwise would not be able to get to and through the mass vaccination site.
  - If both the caregiver and older person are unable to use or have difficultly accessing the internet, they may call 2-1-1 for assistance booking both appointments.

- **Question:** Does this only apply to the four mass vaccination sites?
  - Yes. Mass vaccination sites have the capacity to accommodate companion appointments.
  - Additionally, we recognize that it is challenging for some to get to a mass vaccination site and individuals may be reluctant to go without assistance.
  - In the future, some other sites may have limited capacity to accommodate companion appointments.

- **Question:** I am scheduled to get my second dose, can my caregiver/companion receive their first dose?
  - Yes, if the caregiver/companion is able to schedule a same day appointment for the same time or adjacent to the older person's second dose appointment, the caregiver/companion is able to receive their first dose.
  - The caregiver/companion will need to schedule their second dose appointment either at the site or the website by acknowledging they have received a first dose and need a second dose.

- **Question**: How is caregiver/companion defined?
  - For the purposes of the COVID-19 vaccine eligibility, the individual age 75 or older needs a caregiver/companion to get to or participate in the vaccination appointment. This may be due to transportation or accessibility challenges, including visual or hearing impairments or health factors, such as dementia that require the caregiver to be with the person for the appointment. The caregiver/companion may or may not be a family member.

- **Question:** Will this continue for the 65+ and 2+ co-morbidities group?
  - Supply levels and impact of this initiative will be evaluated in the coming weeks prior to making a determination of the continuation.

- **Question:** Will 2-1-1 be able to assist making these appointments?
  - Yes, for people who are unable to use or have difficultly accessing the internet, 2-1-1 can assist in making the appointments for both the individual over the age of 75 and the caregiver/companion accompanying them to the appointment.

- **Question:** We heard there were long lines and wait times outside at the Eastfield Mall in Springfield?
  - The Eastfield Mall site in Springfield has worked to reduce lines by increasing staffing and reducing the number of appointments per hour.
  - Adjustments have been made to the queuing system to reduce outdoor wait times.