

Dentists' Role in COVID-19 Vaccinations: An Update



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In February of this year, North Carolina joined more than 20 other states who have authorized dentists to administer FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines. The North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative (NCOHC) worked across various sectors in our state to not only build consensus for the authorization, but also to ensure that implementation is as seamless as possible.

We want to recap the facts, highlighting a pathway for each dental provider sector to participate in this historic public health effort.

So, what do dentists need to know?

[Executive Order 193](#) outlines the following actions:

1. Authorized the North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners (NCSBDE) to waive or modify enforcement of laws/rules that would impede “allowing dentists licensed in North Carolina to administer FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines and to administer, by injection, epinephrine or diphenhydramine for the treatment of a severe allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine.”
2. Delegated to the NC Department of Health and Human Services Secretary, Dr. Mandy Cohen, upon consultation with the NCSBDE and the North Carolina Medical Board, authority to modify or waive enforcement of laws/rules that would impede “allowing dentists licensed in North Carolina to administer FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccines and to administer, by injection, epinephrine or diphenhydramine for the treatment of a severe allergic reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine.”
 - a. [NCDHHS Secretarial Order 8](#)
3. Allowed NCSBDE to provide guidance on training and qualifications necessary for licensed dentists to participate. Guidance was released on March 3rd and can be found here: [NCSBDE Training Requirements and Guidance](#). Training prerequisites can be found on page 3 of this document.
4. Outlined liability protections for persons and owners/controllers of facilities involved in testing, vaccination delivery, etc.

North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners Training Requirements

1. Training required is through the Centers for Disease Control, linked here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/training.html>
2. Providers must complete the following:
 - a. [“COVID-19 Vaccine Training: General Overview of Immunization Best Practices for Healthcare Providers”](#)
 - b. [“What Every Clinician Should Know about COVID-19 Vaccine Safety”](#)
 - c. [“COVID-19 Vaccines: General Information and Clinical Guidance Update”](#)
 - d. [“COVID-19 Vaccines: Update on Allergic Reactions, Contraindications, and Precautions”](#)
 - e. [“What Clinicians Need to Know About the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines”](#)
 - f. [“Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine: What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know”](#)
 - g. [“Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine: What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know”](#)

**Training for any other FDA-authorized or approved COVID-19 vaccine(s) should be completed before administering any such vaccine(s).*

Please stay posted for any amendments from the Board regarding training requirements. When/if these occur, we will be sure to update this overview to accurately reflect.

In accordance with [State Health Director Standing Order](#) (signed February 25th, 2021), a dentist who is acting in accordance with Executive Order 193 will need to adhere to all Vaccine Administration Procedures.

Please note the following COVID-19 Vaccination Administration Procedures:

1. Review Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of COVID-19 vaccines - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/info-by-product/clinicalconsiderations.html>

2. Appropriate medical treatment and clinical staff able to manage immediate allergic reactions must be immediately available in the event an acute anaphylactic reaction occurs following administration of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.
3. A medical provider, defined as a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner, must be accessible to provide medical supervision of the vaccination site/service, to assess and evaluate individuals who present with precautions to vaccination, and to answer questions or address problems with carrying out this standing order. This may be by telephone or virtual accessibility.
4. Review Precautions, Contraindications, and Criteria or Circumstances for Notifying Medical Provider sections of this standing order before administering the COVID-19 vaccine.
5. Instruct patients with a history of allergic reactions, including severe allergic reactions, NOT related to vaccines or injectable therapies, components of mRNA

Steps Forward for Implementation

Numerous calls, emails and general correspondences to NCOHC have occurred over the last couple of weeks since the release of the NCSBDE training requirements and general guidance(s).

We wanted to take a moment to outline a few different scenarios in which providers, regardless of sector, can choose to participate in COVID-19 vaccination efforts:

1. Dentists in the “safety-net” sector (those who work in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) or Local Health Departments (LHDs)
 - a. Participation in vaccination efforts may occur once a dentist has completed the necessary training requirements. As safety-net settings are often co-located with their medical counterparts, as well as have vaccination allotments from the State, there should be minimal barriers to entry for these dental providers who wish to join the vaccination efforts of their health center/organization.
2. Dentists located in the private sector
 - a. It is a misconception that if you own your own practice, participation is severely limited or too burdensome. It is correct to state that current vaccine allotments from the State are being directed to support large-scale vaccination efforts (community-based vaccination events, health center vaccination events, etc.). A private practicing dentist, however, may choose

to provide his or her clinical expertise in COVID-19 vaccination delivery in the following ways:

- i. Enter into a provider agreement with the CDC in which the provider requests vaccine allotments for delivery in their practice site(s).
- ii. There is an additional opportunity, as well, for private practicing dentists to participate and help vaccinate their communities through a volunteer-based engagement.
 1. You can reach out to your local health department, FQHC, or community-based site to inquire about volunteering to vaccinate against COVID-19.
 2. The North Carolina Area Health Education Center (NCAHEC) has designed a provider survey where you can sign up to volunteer. More information can be found here: [NC AHEC Program Volunteer Survey](#).

A dental provider's role and potential impact in helping to safely and expediently vaccinate North Carolinians during this public health crisis cannot be overstated.

While guidance and implementation can be challenging, this moment in history represents a milestone in dentists' role in rising to the occasion to further support their communities through vaccination and work toward improvement of population health.

The [North Carolina Oral Health Collaborative](#) commends your efforts in pursuing this endeavor and is willing and able to assist you in your vaccination journey.

If you should have any questions, or want to discuss implementation – including how this may work best in your clinical situation/environment – please do not hesitate to reach out to us at ncohcinfo@foundationhli.org

Stay well,

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