

Our Take: Are you Prepared to Educate Employees on COVID-19 Vaccines?

Corporate Synergies
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For most adults, COVID-19 vaccine eligibility may have seemed like a distant prospect—until now. With vaccine production and distribution increasing and eligibility expanded to all adults on April 19—and predictions of ongoing abundant supply—employees resigned to waiting may suddenly find themselves eligible and with questions. Employees may be hesitant to get the vaccine or may not know how to sign up. While appointments may not be available for everyone right away, now is the time to start educating employees on the COVID-19 vaccine.

The vaccine rollout has been a news mainstay for months, but a familiar and trusted source, like an employer, can provide more relevant and targeted information. An employer survey conducted in March 2021 found that “7 in 10 employers are educating their employees about the COVID-19 vaccines related to eligibility, points of access, benefits as well as safety and efficacy.”¹ The CDC suggests that employers utilize vaccine ambassadors who can share their experience with colleagues, including information on local vaccination efforts.²

The CDC recommends an employee communication plan utilizing multiple channels to best reach your unique workforce. They also emphasize the importance of two-way communication. Listen to those with concerns and answer questions. Education materials should provide accurate and transparent information and proactively address the spread of misinformation. The CDC has created [employer resources](#) with key

messages to help.³ Your benefits consultant can help develop communication campaigns as well.

Educating employees on COVID-19 vaccines with local information is incredibly helpful.

While employees may have been telecommuting for the past year, they’re still likely local to a central area. National organizations like the CDC have [databases](#) of where, when and how to sign up, but these can be overwhelming and difficult to navigate. Providing a focused, personal touch with resources and education for employees can increase vaccine confidence.⁴

In addition to the eligibility and vaccine benefits, employees may need to be briefed on relevant regulations as well. Depending on state and local regulations, employees may be eligible for time off following the vaccine. New York, for instance, recently passed a law requiring employers to provide employees four hours of paid leave per vaccine injection. The latest federal COVID-19 regulation also affirmed that vaccinations will be available to all insured and uninsured free of cost. It requires that insurance covers vaccination without cost sharing for covered individuals.

Any communication about health and wellness creates an effective touchpoint to continue to educate

¹ [National Alliance of Healthcare Purchaser Coalitions](#), “Pulse of the Purchaser”

² [CDC](#), “Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines”

³ [CDC](#), “Workplace Vaccination Program”

⁴ [Harvard Business Review](#), “Employers Have a Crucial Role to Play in Covid-19 Vaccinations”



employees about their benefits and engage them in their own healthcare.

While many employers are still deciding whether to incentivize or mandate vaccination, clear communication and accurate education are important

first steps for any strategy, and according to public health experts and industry leaders, essential to returning to work. Proper education can help employees make informed decisions and amplify the efforts of public health officials. ■

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